BUCKLAND FILLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
Community Day Centre, West Heanton
Thursday 9th November 2023, 7.30pm

Present, Cllr Bond (Chair) Cllr Nethacott (Vice Chair) Cllr Salter,Cllr Balsdon, District Cllr Cottle-Hunkin, County Cllr Saywell (later) Selina Woollacott (Clerk)

1. Apologies. Cllr Davies and PCSO Baker.

2. Declarations of interest. To declare interests in matters on the agenda. None.

3. Open Session for members of the public to speak. No members of the public present.

4. Reports

4.1) Report from County Councillor Saywell. Later in the meeting.

4.2) Report from District Councillor. Report given by Cllr Cottle-Hunkin

Strategic plan consultation- opportunity to say whatever you'd like to the council. A lot of it existed in the previous plan. They have added mental health as a priority alongside physical health. Also cultural enrichment. They are quite broad, but we do use them to align with the service business plans, and the actions are monitored in the quarterly business reports to the internal scrutiny committee. Also might be an opportunity to ask for increased grants for the local community?, this was recently cut in half from £2000 down to £1000 per Councillor and they have a real impact on small groups locally which are increasingly being run by volunteers. People are commenting about affordable housing.

Devon Mobile Library Services has unfortunately been axed across the whole of Devon following the decision made by DCC cabinet meeting on November 8th in Exeter. Cllr Balsdon, it was going to happen as they had made their minds up.

Victoria Park Bideford a total of £330k being spent on play equipment with the majority grant funded.

Market House in Torrington (entrance to Torrington's pannier market similarly being restored using external grants. The contractors are doing a beautiful job by the same people who are restoring the RAAM - Museum in Exeter.

External Scrutiny- in September, looked at the concern over the potential closure of the link centres. - Bideford, Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. Voluntary groups would not offer the same professional staff that are needed for complex mental health issues. Since covid they closed referral routes and did not reinstate staff -led therapy sessions which is something we are pushing for. Our last meeting was concerning education and apprenticeships - Harland and Wolff Appledore shipyard, CTMG, Torrington. Both offering increasing their apprenticeships offers encouraging more adults, lifelong learning and attracting more females in the workplace.

Emma from CTMG recently won an apprenticeship award. Business leaders stated main challenges to attracting people to the workforce are lack of affordable housing and public transport deterring people from applying.

4.3) Report from PCSO Baker. Report read out by the Clerk, for September and November zero logs and zero crimes for the Parish of Buckland FIlleigh.

5. Approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 7th September 2023. The minutes were emailed to all Councillors prior to the meeting. All Councillors agreed the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Cllr Bond signed the minutes.

6. Urgent matters raised by the Chairperson which are not included in the agenda. A matter was raised by the Clerk. I received a letter from Geoffrey Cox MP who has been conducting drop in surgeries over the summer. Part of the letter states. One of the issues that came up time and time again is the crumbling condition of many of the minor roads. It is Clear that DCC requires more help to maintain all the roads. In recent years the Government has provided significant one-off additional funds to enable the County Council to carry out improved levels of road maintenance and I am pressing hard again this year and next for it to increase the resources allocated to this priority. To secure that objective, I would be most grateful for the Council's help in supporting my

constituency-wide Parliamentary Petition. He asks that the petition be circulated in the Parish and returned to him by the 29th January 2024. Cllr Bond took a few sheets to circulate, the Clerk will put up in the noticeboard.
The letter asked the Parish Council for which projects should be taken forward by Torridge's Leveling up partnership. The Parish Council can list up to 3 projects. The Parish Council suggested restoration of the Torrington to Bideford railway line.
The letter also asks to put the following project in order of priority. I have written them in the order the Parish Council placed them highest to lowest.
1. The restoration of the Bideford-Barnstaple railway line.
2. Join second, The re-development of the former Taddiport Creamery site and The rejuvenation of
3. Bideford, Northam, Torrington and Holsworthy town centres with a town centre improvement scheme and special retail zones.
4. The expansion of the Holsworthy Agri-business Centre as a Hub for Agri-industry.
5. The creation of a Bideford Maritime Heritage area, including historic ships and a Maritime Heritage Centre.

Leveling up form to be returned by the end of November.

Cllr Saywell entered the meeting. He gave the following report.
The Parliamentary Petition is very useful. With HS2 being canceled the funds should become available as will not be used on HS2.
Dragon Patching, the West Hearnton road was completed before the weather changed. The Galmington road is on the list for April. Dragon Patching is completed between April and October weather permitting. There are 4 dragon patching machines in the County. The road from Furze House to Sedgewell Cross is on the list to be assessed. Would like to see work completed on the road before it gets too bad.
Devolution - Talks with the Central Government remain ongoing. If all goes well there *might* be an announcement later this month or into the autumn. As ever though with negotiations, things can change so at the moment it is a case of wait and see. If a Deal is announced then I will brief the Town Council on the details as soon as I have them.
Budget Position - Currently there is a projected £13.6m overspend on DCC's Budget for this financial year, mainly relating to pressures on Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care placements. Work is ongoing to address the overspends and I would, at this stage, expect this number to come down as we get towards the end of the financial year. It is important that we do so. A restructuring of Council staff teams has started. Although the Council has enough in reserves to cover off this overspend, experience from other Councils shows us that if you don't tackle the overspends in a year, they usually continue and get worse in the following financial year(s). An example of that is our neighbours in Somerset who, unlike Devon, failed to balance their budget last year and had to take £18 million out of their reserves to cover the overspend. They had to take money out of their reserves again this year to set a budget and are now facing a projected overspend of £21 million this financial year. The Parish Council discussed why Children's Social Care cost so much.

Mobile Libraries - Cabinet upheld the decision to end the Mobile Library service, which will cease at the end of February. There are a number of alternative measures including:

- Using nearest library building (the mobile van did stop at several stops very near to Torrington Library, including a residential street within the town)
- Using the Home Library Service – volunteers collecting and delivering books to people.
- Using the Good Neighbour Scheme – similar to the home library service but instead nominating friends and family to collect/deliver books. This is an already established scheme in Devon and across the Country and has had a good track record.
- Increased use of Digital subscriptions/reading options.
- Developing a rural outreach / Community Libraries.

The Council is looking to run a number of pilots with different community libraries, including one hopefully in Langtree. Books can be ordered in advance with a delivery/drop off at a village hall or other community location for collection by residents on a 2 or 4 week lending cycle. Library books currently move all around Devon – for example if you ordered a book from Torrington Library that was in Ivybridge or Axminister, it will be moved to Torrington for you to collect. The plan is to utilise this delivery network to get books out into the community. Further funding (£15,000) will be made available for grants to support the setting up of Community Libraries via the Growing Communities Fund.

Along with the high costs, across the whole of Torrington Rural in 2022 on average 83.6 people were using the van out of a population of 14,293, so an average of 0.58% of the population. I want more people to be accessing the library service in the countryside, but it is clear to me we have to develop different ways of delivering this service as the old mobile van was no longer, sadly, accessible enough for many of our residents and as you'll have seen from the figures above, not cost effective to run. Cllr Bond, schools send home books at the correct reading level for the child. Cllr Bond asked if DCC will invest into the Schools for more books. Cllr Saywell yes this should be a way to supply more books into schools.

Cllr Saywell and Cllr Cottle-Hunkin left the meeting.

7. Website. Cllr Bond and Clerk meeting Friday 10th November to look at the issues with the website.

8. Finance

8.1) Bank Account Balance and update on accounts. On the 05th October 2023 the bank account balance was £13,073.43. The 2nd Parish Precept payment was paid in, on the 29th September £1,578.50 and the VAT reclaim on the 6th September. £257.15

No outstanding cheques to be presented.

The account holds £1,067.22 of P3 money.

The Parish Council agreed in March to Grant £500 to a Coronation gate.

The Chq on this evening agenda total to £368.29

This leaves a useable balance of £11,137.92

8.2) Chq for TDC, Clerk Salary payment, £361.80

8.3) Chq for Clerk, Paper. £6.49

Councillors agreed to the payment of 8.2 and 8.3 the cheques were signed.

8.4) Signatories on Bank Account. Cllr Davies is on the account as a signatory, Clerk has submitted the online forms to remove Mr Pett and add Cllr Balsdon.

8.5) Half Year Accounts. Clerk emailed out the half year accounts and brought print outs to the meeting. Up to the 30th September money in, totals to £4,183.15 this is all the Parish Precept for the Year, the VAT reclaim and P3 funds. There are no more funds expected to be paid in this financial year.

Expenditure, up to the 30th September £1,176.10. There will be more Clerk Salary to pay. I expected an invoice for footpath repairs before the end of the year. Funds are set aside for this as it is P3 money. Grant applications will start coming in and the £500 already promised for the Kissing Gate is set aside. No questions from Councillors.

8.6) Citizen Advice Grant. Email received for the request of a grant towards training and running costs. The Councillors discussed, last year £500 was granted. Cllr Balsdon would like to see more funds granted to local organisation in the Parish or that Parishioners use often. The Councillors agreed to grant £100 to the Citizen Advice. Cheque to be written and signed at the January meeting Clerk to check who Cheque is to be payable to.

8.7) North Devon Record Office Grant. Email received for a grant request. Last year the Parish Council granted £60. The Councillors agreed £50 for a grant this year. Cheque to be signed at the January meeting.

9) Clerk Salary Review. Clerk explained that the NALC had agreed to the new pay Scale. At the November 2022 meeting it was agreed that the Clark would be paid scale level 9 which was £12.06 an hour and is now £13.06 an hour. The increase would start from the 1st December. The Clark pay would increase with the scale level 9 increase. Cllr Balsdon and Cllr Nethacott did not agree with the new hourly rate; they felt it should be more. The Council discussed the different pay levels. The contracted hours are 60 hours a year. Which is still correct. The Councillors agreed to increase the Clerk to level 12 £13.73 an hour. Starting 1st December. Clerk to contact TDC payroll services.

10. King's Coronation

10.1) Kissing Gate. Clerk read out the following update. We have got all the posts and rails and gate rails cut up in oak ready to go. A staff member will make the gate first and will then put it all up. It could be another month as he is going on leave now.

10.2) Frame for the Village Hall. Clerk read out the following update. Cllr Bond declared an interest as he has a close relationship with the carpenter. The frame is being made by a local carpenter. The cost will be £100, and the

picture will be framed and hung in time for Christmas. Councillors discussed and agreed to grant £50 towards the cost of the frame. Cheque was written and signed, Clerk to deliver the cheque to the treasurer of the Hall committee.

11. Planning. Review of Planning Applications in Buckland Filleigh and adjoining parishes.
1/0936/2023/FUL Erection of a stable and hardstanding. Filleigh Moor Gate, Sheepwash, Beaworthy, Parish Council was asked to comment by 23rd October. No Objection was the comment submitted.

1/0679/2023/FUL Retrospective siting of motor home for the purposes of holiday accommodation, Parsons Cottage Airstream Motorhome, Buckland Filleigh. Parish Council was asked to comment by 6th October 2023. No Objection was the comment submitted.

12) Planning Decisions.
1/0679/2023/FUL Retrospective siting of motor home for the purposes of holiday accommodation. Parsons Cottage Airstream Motorhome, Buckland Filleigh,that the application was withdrawn.

1/0263/2023/FUL Proposed horse arena for personal use. Land At Grid Reference 245664 108314, Buckland Filleigh, the application was granted permission.

Planning and Planning decisions were read out to the meeting by the Chair.

13. Footpaths and Roads
13.1) Galmington Road. The road will not be Dragon Patched until April. Clerk will keep an eye on the road and report potholes which will appear over the winter.
13.2) P3 money and repairs on Footpaths. Still waiting for the bridge to be repaired. An emergency job took priority.
13.3) Grit Bins. Clerk checked all the grit bins and reported the ones which needed filling or maintenance work. All bins are now full.

Airband have dug up the road at Sedgwell Cross and the area dug up has sunk. Sedgwell Cross to Battledown. Clerk to report.

14. Correspondence email to Councillors prior to the meeting.
Notification of Road Closure – Work Ref: LM601KR10403967 on Road from Bonds Cross to Horseshoe Bridge, Buckland Filleigh. South West Water to complete utility works outside South Hayes. Will take place between 05/02/2024 and 09/02/2024.
Notification of Road Closure – Work Ref: LM501NC10301018 & LM501NC10301018A on Road from Filleighmoor Gate to Swarddicott Cross & Road from Filleighmoor Gate to Hembury Gate. South West Water to complete utility works from outside Ashburton House to outside near Filleigh Moor. Will take place between 15/01/2024 and 19/01/2024.
TDC's strategic plan for 2023 – 28.
Area Advisory Groups - Bideford, Holsworthy & Torrington.

The above was read out by the Chair**.**

15. Matters for inclusion in the next meeting.
The next meeting will be held on Thursday 11th January 2024 at 7.30pm
Parish Precept, Budget, P3 Application.

Meeting Closed 8.55pm

Selina Woollacott, Buckland Filleigh Parish Clerk.
Email: bucklandfilleighparishclerk@gmail.com Telephone: 01409 281280