BUCKLAND FILLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
Community Day Centre, West Heanton
Thursday 7th September 2023, 7.30pm

Present, Cllr Bond (Chair) Cllr Nethacott (Vice Chair) Cllr Salter. Cllr Davies, Selina Woollacott (Clerk)

1. Apologies, Cllr Balsdon, PCSO Baker, County Cllr Saywell.

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. Clerk read out the following report.

DCC Update Report for Buckland Filleigh Parish Council

Although it has been quiet on the formal meeting front over the summer period it has been a busy time at Devon County Council with a lot of work going on behind the scenes on budget/financial management, modernising the County Council, the Governance Review and ongoing devolution negotiations. Main highlights are:

Devolution – Negotiations with Central Government remain ongoing, if all goes well a Devolution Deal *may* be agreed and ready to go public later this month or into October… but as ever with negotiations like this they are subject to change so it will be a case of wait and see!

Budgets – The County Council is currently projecting an overspend of £9 million for the end of the financial year, with the main pressures coming from the Adult Social Care budget. However, I remind you this time last year we were looking at a £40 million overspend and ended up bringing that back down to a break even position. I am confident through management action plans that these overspends can be reduced and covered off. We are not anywhere near the position other Councils like Birmingham have found themselves in… BUT, that does not mean we can be complacent and rest on our laurels. And it is a reminder that our room for financial maneuver remains tight.

Great Torrington School extension – A new 'block' has been constructed on the grounds of the secondary school at Great Torrington, jointly funded by the school and DCC. The project consists of a new two-story teaching block which will accommodate three new classrooms, office space, small group work areas and a new library resource area which will be connected to the main school via a new link. The project has also enabled the existing library to be re-modelled into additional dining space for pupils, providing a much-needed expansion to the original small dining hall originally built in 1939. The total cost was £1.5 million, of which DCC funded £725,000. DCC's funds have come from local housing development contributions… So if you ever wonder where education contributions go, here is a very good example!

Dragon Patching – Progress on dragon patching has been hampered a bit by the inclement weather over the summer. However, if our current sunny weather pattern holds then I'm hopeful the crews will catch up over September. This treatment does need good weather conditions to be the most effective so realistically it will be difficult to carry on into October… I've been informed by the Neighbourhood Highways Officer that the Dragon is currently working on sites in Ashreigney and Roborough, but the West Heanton road is next on the list. Again though, we will be dependent on good weather conditions so fingers firmly crossed that we have a good spell. Any sites not able to get done this year will be rolled over into the next financial year to be done once the weather gets better again.

For next year, we are looking to put forward the road from Sedgewell Cross to Furze for Dragon Patching though this will need to be assessed with other sites. If/when it is confirmed I will let the Parish know.

Mobile Library/Community Libraries – DCC's Cabinet took the decision to end the Mobile Library service and replace it with different rural outreach offers as the current vans have reached the end of their working lives (15+ years) and need replacing. However there are only 3,100 active users of the mobile van and there has been a clear trend, both Devon wide and on the Torrington van, of a continued overall decline in the number of users. The current service costs over £200,000 in revenue funding a year and the cost to purchase

four new bespoke vans will be up to £800,000. In 2022 in Buckland Filleigh the van visited the Village Hall and West Heanton 10 times and both sites had an average of 2.7 visitors per stop over the course of the year. To recommission the van service as it is now will require a significant investment of funding for a service with declining numbers and would put the viability of the main library service at risk. So, rather than do that, DCC is looking at alternatives including using the Home Library Service to deliver books to people's home, increased uptake of digital offers on kindles, etc. and a community/rural library outreach offer that would be supported by the main Library service and would not be onerous on volunteers to maintain. This week I visited with the Library Officer from DCC potential community library sites/projects at Langtree, Beaford and High Bickington. The opposition have 'called in' the decision to end the mobile van service and it is due to be discussed by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee at the end of this month so we shall see what happens…

As ever, any issues you'd like me to look into please let me know.

4.2) Report from District Councillor. No Report.

4.3) Report from PCSO Baker.Clerk read out the following. For July and August in the Parish of Buckland Filleigh 1 Crime which was a civil dispute. Logs - 1 nuisance ASB, 1 highway disruption, and 1 harassment.

5. Approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 6th July 2023. The minutes were sent to all Councillors prior to the meeting. All Councillors agreed the minutes are 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 piece of information from Cllr Bond. One of the electricity lines in Buckland Filleigh is being upgraded. This involves upgrading the line and transformers. The line being upgraded is the electricity line that feeds into the Nursing Home. All affected properties should have been informed as power cuts are planned when work is being carried out.

7. Website. Cllr Bond and Clerk need to set a date to update the website now that the Summer holidays are over.

8. Finance

8.1) Bank Account Balance and update on accounts. No bank statement since the last meeting. On the 5th June 2023 the bank account balance was £11,387.78.The outstanding cheques to be presented since the last statement total £150. The account holds £1,067.22 of P3 money. The Parish Council agreed in March to Grant £500 to a Coronation gate. This brings the usable balance down to £9,670.56.

8.2) VAT reclaim. Clerk has submitted the VAT reclaim form the total on the form is £257.15 this should be paid into the Bank Account within a month.

8.3) Signatories on Bank Account. The plan is to remove Mr Pett as a signatory and add Cllr Davies and Cllr Balsdon. Mr Pett has completed his part and Cllr Davies received the email and has completed his part. Cllr Balsdon did not receive an email. Clerk to action the request to add Cllr Balsdon so that he receives an email.

9. King's Coronation

9.1) Kissing Gate. Clerk sent an email asking if the Church Wardens were ready for a Cheque towards the cost of the new kissing gate to mark the King's Coronation. They are not ready yet as the gate is still being made.

9.2) Frame for the Village Hall. Clerk asked the Village Hall Committee if they have an idea of the cost for a frame for the Coronation scroll, as the Parish Council would like to discuss granting funds towards the frame. The reply was that a resident is hand making the frame and has no idea of cost yet.

10. Planning. Review of Planning Applications in Buckland Filleigh and adjoining parishes. None.

11) Planning Decisions.

1/0342/2023/FUL Extension to existing storage warehouse approved under application 1/0605/2020/FUL (amended red edge) Mike Wye & Associates,Buckland Filleigh Sawmills. The application was granted

permission. The above was read out and then a conversation about other planning applications in the Parish which have not yet got to the decision stage was discussed.

12. Footpaths and Roads

12.1) Galmington Road. Clerk has received a complaint via email about the poor state of the Galmington road which was replied to and the email sent on to Cllr Saywell. The road is on the list for Dragon Patching as stated in Cllr Saywell report, Progress on dragon patching has been hampered a bit by the inclement weather over the summer. However, if our current sunny weather pattern holds then I'm hopeful the crews will catch up over September. This treatment does need good weather conditions to be the most effective so realistically it will be difficult to carry on into October. Any sites not able to get done this year will be rolled over into the next financial year to be done once the weather gets better again.

12.2) P3 money and repairs on Footpaths. The main repair which the Parish Council is waiting to see completed is the bridge on the Glebe to Chalhanger footpath. Clerk has contacted the contractor he will complete as soon as he can.

12.3) Drain. East Lodge road, next to the grit bin Clerk has reported the pothole there and Clerk is going to check what is happening about the drain on this road.

12.4) Grit Bins. Clerk will be checking the grit bins ready for winter. The grit bins in Buckland Filleigh Parish are located at Galmington, East Lodge, Filleigh Moor Gate and Lower West Heanton. Snow Warden Cllr Bond confirms there is a good supply of grit in bags for the Parish.

13. Correspondence email to Councillors prior to the meeting.

25th - 26th October 2023 Road Closure Bonds Cross to Horseshoe Bridge, Airband.

Read out and no other items to be added.

14. Matters for inclusion in the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 9th November 2023 at 7.30pm.

Update on Clerk Salary Scale.

Meeting Closed at 8.23pm.

Selina Woollacott, Buckland Filleigh Parish Clerk.
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