# BUCKLAND FILLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

## Annual Meeting Minutes

## West Heanton Day Centre and Zoom

## Thursday 13th May 2021, 7.45pm

**Present**, Cllr Adrian Pett (Chair) Cllr Tom Bond (vic Chair), Cllr John Salter, Cllr Alistair Nethacott, Selina Woollacott (Clerk) Via Zoom County Cllr Andrew Saywell.

**1. Apologies**, Cllr Dave Balsdon, District Cllr Richard Wiseman.

**2. Election of Officers,** Cllr Pett handed over to the Clerk. Cllr Nethercott proposed Cllr Pett for Chairperson and Cllr Salter seconded the proposal. Cllr Pett is happy to continue as Chairperson for another year. No objections from the rest of the Parish Councillors.
Cllr Pett proposed Cllr Bond for Vic Chairperson and Cllr Nethacott seconded the proposal. Cllr Bond is happy to continue as Vic Chairperson for another year. No objections from the rest of the Parish Councillors.

Clerk hands back to Cllr Pett.

**3. Appointment of Responsible Financial Officer,** It is common practice on Parish Councils for the Clerk to be the Responsible Financial Officer. Clerk is happy to hold the position. No objections from the Parish Councillors.

**4. Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2021,** Receipts for the year totaled to £5,165.91. This was made up of the Parish Precept £3,010, £1,000 bequest to the Parish Council, £960 P3 funding and VAT reclaim of £195.35. TDC provided a Covid grant to all Parishes in April 2020 to be used in the parish for a support network or something Covid related. Buckland Filleigh Parish Council were unable to spend or grant the funds. TDC reclaimed the amount from the September Parish Precept payment. The expenditure was £5,511.57. £640 on payroll service and Clerk salary. £1,710 in grants. £814.97 for new laptop and windows 365. £1454.64 on footpaths £960 of this was from P3 funding. Chair Allowance was used to buy a gift for the owner of Buckland House for supplying electric to the pump in the dip. The rest is basic annual expenses. £412.91 in VAT to be reclaimed.

**5. District and County Councillors reports for 2020/2021,**
No District Councillors report.

County Councillors Report from Cllr Andrew Saywell,

It has been an extraordinary year for all of us here in Buckland Filleigh and Torrington Rural. Like everyone else, the pandemic has had a huge impact on the work of Devon County Council.

Can I first of all say **thank you** to Buckland Filleigh and Torrington Rural for re-electing me on May 6th. I was returned with an increased majority (1,525) and 55% of the vote. But with large majorities come large responsibilities, and there is a big job to do over the next four years.

However, looking back at last year, I would like to say **thank you** again. Thank you to you, the people of Buckland Filleigh, for looking after those in need over the last year, particularly our more elderly residents and clinically vulnerable residents who have had to spend most of the last 14 months shielding.

**Thank you also for keeping our Covid infection rates, both locally and across Devon, low.**
Throughout this crisis Torridge District and Devon County as a whole have had some of the lowest Covid infection rates in the entire country. I don't believe this is just down to good luck and geography, throughout the pandemic there has been good adherence to the public health guidelines – people have observed social distancing, worn face coverings in enclosed spaces, and have kept washing their hands. All of this I believe has helped in ensuring our area has had one of the lowest infection rates in the entire UK, and puts us in a good position now to come out of the pandemic with hopefully the worst behind us.

Like the Parish Council, Devon County Council switched to 'Remote Working' as the lockdown was introduced. Virtual meetings have become the norm. Instead of spending hours of the day travelling down to County Hall and back in the evening to Parish Councils, I've been able to do it all from home over Zoom, Skype and Microsoft Teams!

Devon County Council, as the Public Health Authority, has taken a leading role in helping to combat the pandemic. Very early on, 'Team Devon' was formed which brought together all of the District Council leaders, DCC's leaders, representatives from Town and Parish Councils, Police, Fire, the NHS and other agencies. It has meant there has been joint working and cooperation, with faster results and avoiding bureaucratic delays or obstructions.

Over 35,000 shielding or medically vulnerable people in Devon have been supported by DCC during the pandemic. Over £600,000 was allocated to a Hardship Fund to support people who had been made redundant but were not yet in receipt of benefit support. The County Council has helped with the delivery of food parcels to children on free school meals.

Devon County Council has also been working hard to support the Devon Economy and I was delighted that we were able to secure funding from DCC towards getting a two new work hubs in Torrington Rural (one in Torrington, the other in Winkleigh) to provide office space and support for home workers and micro businesses.

Locally, during this time, I have endeavoured to keep my Parishes as up to date as possible with the latest developments. Anyone who cares to read the Parish Council minutes will see that I have always provided the latest information regarding Covid-19 in and around our area.

As we come out of lockdown Devon County Council is running community testing sites. These are designed mainly for key workers and to pick up asymptomatic carriers of the virus. There are mobile testing sites available in the major towns, including Torrington, Holsworthy, Bideford and Okehampton. Home testing kits are also becoming more and more available.

Of course while Covid-19 has dominated my work, and that of the Council, the everyday issues still continue. Highways is always a topical conversation, especially in Buckland Filleigh.

The highlight for me over the past year has been to finally secure funding for the drainage works at the Dip and to at long last see these works take place. Feedback on the works has been very favourable and so far, the drain has been working very well.

Following the bad winter we have had a lot of potholes, though Highways are starting to catch up on the back log. The road down to Furze Cross is on my radar as needing attention, and I would like to see the road through the village and the Dip get surface dressed in due course.

Going however, back to Covid-19. Looking forward we are in a good position. The current situation in Devon is as follows:

- Infection numbers are now broadly static over the past couple of weeks, seeing 10-15 new cases a day on average, but given low numbers we are seeing marginal rises/falls but can play out as large percentage swings.
- Seeing cases predominantly in young people and working age adults (picked up through asymptomatic testing) so it is important we all still adhere to the public health measures and restrictions (Hands, Face, Space, Fresh air) both within work and outside work.
- Phase 2 over the vaccine programme (under 50's) has commenced. Please wait to be contacted and then you can book 1st and 2nd jab.
- DCC are still encouraging people to get a rapid Lateral Flow test twice a week, even if you have been vaccinated as you can still catch COVID and be infectious. Please visit **Devon.cc/testing** to find out how you can get tested.

The vaccination programme has been a success in Devon, with over 690,000 people having received their first dose, and 324,000 second doses being given. The uptake of those aged 55 and above has been **95%**.

So, looking forward, I am hopeful that we can come out of this pandemic and return, at the very least, to a sense of normality.

It is going to be a very busy four years. My priority for the next term is recovery – recovery from the pandemic and the recovery of our economy and local health services. It's a big job, but I am looking forward to getting things done over the next four years.

All Councillors agreed that a tidy job has been completed on the dip and that you can now see where the different sections of the wall join, and the foundation of the arch which was removed many years ago. Thank You to Cllr Saywell for his involvement in getting the dip issue fixed.

Meeting Finished 7.55pm

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