

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
OF BUCKLAND BREWER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 13th JANUARY 2016 AT 7:30 AT
BUCKLAND BREWER SCHOOL**

Members Present: Mrs Barbara Babb, Mrs Marie Douglas, Mr Andrew Hewitt, Mr George Heywood, Mr Jim Lowe, Mr Trevor Mills, Mrs Shirley Tilley and Mr David Watson.

Also in attendance 5 members of the public

Parish Clerk: Patrick Blossie

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

177. Apologies for Absence Cllr. Alison Boyle

178. Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 9th December 2015: **The minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2015 were confirmed and signed.**

179. Declarations of Interest None

180. Public Participation None

181. Casual Vacancy: Progress Report The Clerk reported that 10 or more signatures had been received by the Elections Officer requesting an election. Notices had been posted to this effect and nominations must be received by 22nd January 2016. A provisional date of 18th February 2016 has been set for the election, subject to the availability of the village hall. The cost is likely to be the region of £1,600 unless there is only one nomination, in which case that person would be elected unopposed. In the event that there are no nominations, the Parish Council will be asked to co-opt a new councillor.

182. 2016/17 Budget and Precept Setting The Clerk presented an estimated outturn for the current year and proposed budget for 2016/17. He explained that the parish element of the Council Tax Support Grant that had previously been passed on to parishes in full was being reduced to 50% in 2016/2017 and will be withdrawn completely in 2017/18. This reduction is more than compensated for by an increase in the taxbase, mainly due to the new houses at Hillpark. Therefore, it would be possible to raise the same precept of £6,750 with a lower council tax rate (equivalent band D rate of £21.33 in 2015/16 down to £20.53 in 2016/17). Each item of income and expenditure was discussed. Apart from inflation and minor changes to existing budget heads, the following new and revised expenditure heads were agreed in principal:

- an increase in the Playing Field Association Grant to £500 annually with an additional £400 in 2016/17 to assist with the cost of essential repairs
- £3,000 for fencing the recently acquired amenity lands and other essential maintenance works
- establishing an annual grant of £200 towards maintaining the church graveyard
- £100 to fund an event to mark the opening of the new village hall
- £300 for an event to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday
- Establishing an annual contribution of £200 to the North Devon Records Office, and
- An increase of £100 (from £500 to £600) in the budget for 'Other Grants'

It was also agreed to transfer £2,500 from the General Reserve to a new Winter Maintenance Reserve to meet the cost of salt-spreading when it is required.

It was proposed that the precept should be increased by £1,500 in order to balance the budget and maintain total reserves at about the same level. This would increase the parish band D rate by 18.01% to £25.17, an increase of £3.84 per year per property.

The budget and precept level will be reviewed again at the meeting on 27th January 2016, by which time it will be known whether the council will need to meet the costs of an election and any changes to the Clerk's salary and expenses will have been approved.

It was agreed that the Council would apply for a TAP Fund Grant of £718 towards the cost of fencing the area alongside the 'school playing field' next to the new Village Hall site.

183. Members' Reports

Barbara Babb had been asked by Andrew Gander if the Parish Council would like him to continue cutting the village green. **This was agreed unanimously** and **Barbara will inform Andrew and pass on the Council's thanks.**

Andrew Hewitt asked whether the Council wanted to invest in a beacon to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday but it was decided not to do this.

George Heywood reported potholes half-way up Craneham Hill and gulleys that need repairing in Thorn Lane where they are proud of the road and a danger to vehicles. **The Clerk will report these.**

Jim Lowe (i) reported on the site meeting with Devon Air Ambulance at the playing field to discuss night flying requirements. The DAAT plan is to provide a service up to midnight in the near future and to extend this to an all-night service in the near future. To do this DAAT needs a number of identified 'helipads' – designated sites with lighting that can be activated by DAAT using the mobile network. The cost of each installation is estimated at £4,800 + VAT. DAAT plan to survey the playing field and an area adjacent to Hillpark. Trevor Mills suggested that they should be asked to attend the Annual Parish Meeting. (ii) Jim asked if the Village Hall Committee would send a representative to the next parish council to give an update on the progress of the planning application for the new hall. **Trevor Mills will ask the Village Hall Secretary to attend.** (iii) Arrangements were agreed to hold the Clerk's annual appraisal in the Church Room at 7:30pm on Monday 18th January 2016.

Trevor Mills (i) passed round a copy of an agreement for the Blackhorse Fields tenancy that he and Andrew Hewitt had negotiated with Robert Hicks. The Clerk will distribute copies for discussion at the next meeting. (ii) Residents at Hillpark had complained about the need to leave their rubbish for collection at the entrance to the estate. Apparently, the refuse vehicles are not permitted to enter the estate because the roads have not yet been adopted. However, the rubbish pile is an eyesore and a health hazard, and some residents are not leaving all their rubbish in secured black bags. **Trevor will talk to Councillor Hicks and the Waste & Recycling Manager, Richard Haste.**

The Clerk (i) passed round a letter from Devon County Council consulting on the proposal to redirect a footpath at Bowden so that it passes around a field rather than through it. **This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.** (ii) Confirmation had been received from Barclays Bank that the latest mandate changes had been implemented and a second letter requesting to transfer £8,000 from the General Account to the Savings Account was signed by Barbara Babb and Jim Lowe

Date of Next Meeting:

Clerk's Annual Review: 18th January 2016 (Part II only – public and press excluded) (Church Room, 7:30pm)
Parish Council (Precept Approval and main meeting): 27th January 2016 (Buckland Brewer School, 7:30pm)

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:20 pm.

Chairman: **Date:**