

Minutes of the meeting of Buckerell Parish Council held at Buckerell Church on Monday 8th December 2014

Those Present

Mr Stuart Bader (Vice- Chair)
Mrs Wendy Wayne
Mr Ryan Knight
Mr Steve Stone
Heloise Marlow – Clerk

There were four members of the public present.

1. Apologies

Councillor Claire Wright, Councillor Susie Bond, PC Clive Vickery

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on the 23rd September 2014 were agreed and signed

ACTION

3. Matters arising

None

4. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Following the resignation of Mr Steve Stone, Ryan Knight proposed that Stuart Bader should take over and this was seconded by Wendy Wayne. Stuart Bader agreed to accept the role until May 2015 when elections would be held in respect of full Council. Stuart Bader asked that it be put on record that Steve Stone's contribution to the working of the Council would be missed and thanked him for all his work during the past years.

Stuart Bader asked Wendy Wayne if she would take on the role of Vice-Chair until May 2015 and she agreed. Stuart Bader proposed Wendy Wayne and this was seconded by Ryan Knight.

5. Co-option of new Councillors

Mr Donovan Galling was proposed by Wendy Wayne and seconded by Stuart Bader. Mr Nicholas Maxwell-Lawford was proposed by Ryan Knight and seconded by Wendy Wayne.

6. Complaint against the Deer Park Hotel

Donovan Galling and other residents have reported excessive noise from the Deer Park Hotel. They have contacted the Deer Park Hotel about this and have met with the Manager. Unfortunately the excessive noise levels have continued and Donovan Galling has now written to the Environmental Health Department and to the Deer Park Hotel. He has received an automated response from the Environmental Health Department but none from the Deer Park. The residents affected fear that the matter will be further exacerbated as the Hotel has made known its intention to host up to 300 weddings a year.

At this stage Donovan Galling is not asking the BPC to do anything but wished the residents of Buckerell to be aware of the issue.

7. Police Report

Heloise Marlow confirming that she had received confirmation of 3 reported crimes between 22nd September 2014 and 8th December 2014.

8. Public Questions

A member of the public noted that Butts Cottages was an item on the agenda and asked for confirmation of the current position as no work had yet started on 3 Butts Cottages – Heloise Marlow confirming that she had spoken with the new owner. He confirmed that he had had structural issues inside the building which had taken some time to resolve. He was hopeful that these had now resolved and assured Heloise Marlow that work to the outside of the building would start in the New Year.

9. Finance

- a) The balance at the bank is £4,351.90
- b) The following payments for approval were unanimously agreed by the Councillors:
 - i. David Wayne – Plastics Run October and December - £40.00
 - ii. Patricia Craig-Macquaide – Bulbs and Plants for the War Memorial Pots £37.40.
 - iii. Heloise Marlow – Clerks expenses – September, October, November - £174.00

10. Councillor Claire Wrights report

More swingeing budget cuts to come....

Devon County Council's budget is about to experience yet more massive cuts due to government austerity measures, and the Devon conservative leadership is preparing for £50m cuts in the next financial year, as part of £110m over the four year term. As yet we don't know the detail of those cuts (they will be revealed at Wednesday's cabinet meeting, which I have registered to speak at) but the highways budget is set to lose £3.4m next year. Gritting routes are set to be lost (although not in the Feniton parish) and grit bins are unlikely to be refilled. Also under consideration is:

1. Reducing locally determined highway drainage and cleaning activities carried out by Parish Lengthsmen
2. Reviewing gully emptying schedules to concentrate more on problem gullies
3. Stopping specialist tree surveying on trees on privately owned land close to, but not on the highway
4. Stopping routine renewal of non-essential road markings
5. Only repairing streetlights when two or more lights become faulty
6. Stopping cuts of grass verges on minor roads (except for safety reasons)
7. Stopping annual routine cleaning of cattle grids
8. Stopping providing free stiles and gates to landowners with a public right of way and reduce vegetation clearance on more paths
9. Ceasing maintenance of variable message road signs and remove when they become defective

The final announcement on what cuts to highways will be taken forward, is expected to be in January.

Devon County Council health and wellbeing scrutiny committee oppose Ottery Hospital bed and minor injuries unit closures

Devon County Council's health and wellbeing scrutiny committee strongly opposed the cuts to community hospital beds and minor injuries units, across East Devon, at its meeting on 17 November.

A coach full of Ottery residents protested outside the building with placards, against the plans to shut all the in-patient beds and minor injuries unit at the hospital.

The North, East and West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (NEW Devon CCG) has a huge hole in its finances, to the tune of around £30m by next year.

But the CCG has not provided, despite many requests to do so, important financial information on how much any new hospital at home scheme would cost in the future or how much it would cost to turn the hospital into a health hub or multi-faceted clinic.

I believe that the new system would be more expensive to administer. The plans seem to me to be more about ideology and government pressure to move care closer to home, than, a move that would benefit patients, or even be financially sensible.

Most of the councillors on the health and wellbeing scrutiny committee, of which I am a member, were very concerned about the proposals to shut hospital beds and minor injuries units. In East Devon only Honiton and Exmouth hospitals would retain their MIUs, which would become "urgent care centres."

There has been uproar about the plans to close Ottery Hospital beds and the minor injuries units, with hundreds of people attending public meetings and several council committees, including EDDC's overview and scrutiny committee and Devon County Council's East Devon locality committee, all voting in favour of my proposals to object to the plans.

At the health and wellbeing scrutiny committee meeting on 17 November, all councillors voted in favour of my proposal to strongly oppose the plans, except three of the conservative group, who abstained.

Also included in the health scrutiny committee's recommendation to the North, East, and West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group's (NEW Devon CCG) governing body, is a request for more detailed information about the impact of the plans, including finances.

The NEW Devon CCG was set to make its decision on 6 January, however, it now seems that the decision may be delayed. Any decision will be brought back to the health and wellbeing scrutiny committee, for further consideration.

The health and wellbeing scrutiny committee is the only committee that has a statutory responsibility to scrutinise changes to health services, across the county.

In five years time it is estimated that there will be a truly horrifying deficit of over £400m, across Devon's health service.

This is due to three things.

1. Historical underfunding by government in Devon's health service

2. Restrictions in NHS funding by government in recent years, which has seen a drop in funding from around six to eight per cent a year, to levels of no more than inflation
3. A growing demand from more people living in the area, more older people and more people with complex health needs

These elements seem to be combining to create a “perfect storm” for a looming crisis in Devon’s NHS, which is now also cutting funding for large number of hospital procedures and operations to cope with the budget shortfalls. Something that the health and wellbeing scrutiny committee is writing to Devon MPs about, due to the growing demand and dropping investment.

I very much hope that the CCG will reverse its plans to shut hospital beds in Ottery and elsewhere and there are already studies to show that the hospital at home scheme is failing in other parts of the county.

The direction of travel, which is shutting hospital beds and putting more pressure on to big hospitals like the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, as well as carers and patients, is quite simply totally wrong and damaging to patient care.

Bid for St Saviours as Ottery’s community centre

A bid is being by Ottery Town Council (with my help) to Devon County Council for acquiring the St Saviours building, which was vacated earlier this year by Social Services staff. The building was declared surplus to requirements a few months ago and the council planned to sell it. The building is next to St Saviours bridge, over the River Otter.

St Saviours is surprisingly huge and has lots of potential.

I had previously asked at a county council cabinet meeting that the council might defer any sale of the building, but was granted just one month – until the end of June. Then, in October, an officer from the communities team argued successfully to allow Ottery St Mary Town Council until 20 December to prepare a business case for a free transfer of the building.

A major part of the bid for St Saviours is a place for relocation of the library, which is deemed unfit for purpose due to its steps.

Ottery Town Council has already taken over ownership of the youth centre, which is next door to St Saviours, and will open again shortly.

The deadline for submission of the business case for Saviours in Ottery is 20 December and we are hopeful of success. It has been a huge amount of work in a very short space of time and if we are successful in creating a community centre here, it will be a massive boost for Ottery and its surrounding villages.

It was agreed that Buckerell Parish Council would send in a letter of support against the cuts to Councillor Wright.

11. Councillor Susie Bond's report

Former Cllr Brown. Police announced that there was insufficient evidence to charge Graham Brown and the police investigation is now closed. The Chief Executive is suggesting that Overview & Scrutiny set up a Task & Finish Forum but must first decide the terms of reference. He is suggesting specifically that only councillors with an open mind sit on the TAFF and that Cllr Wright shouldn't therefore be included.

Tripartite agreement signed. Last week, it was announced that EDDC had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Exeter City Council and Teignbridge Council to explore ways of closer working. This sets up the Great Exeter Visioning Board which will be made up of the leaders, CEOs and portfolio holders responsible for development. How this will affect the Local Plan, and development generally in the district, we have yet to find out. There was no advance warning to councillors that this was being planned, although they have always sought ways for closer co-operation (joint IT working, SHMA, etc.).

Office relocation. Rethink being considered following the marketing exercise of EDDC's assets. Currently, they are looking at the main building being on Heathpark with a satellite office in Exmouth, where offices have been vacated by Devon County Council. Cabinet agreed this approach at their meeting on 3 December. The Skypark option is considered too expensive. This is obviously good news for Honiton, although there are widespread concerns about the level of borrowing the Council is proposing to fund the move. The current plan is for a new build to be incorporated with the East Devon Business Centre. All existing businesses using the building will be able to stay.

Land west of Hayne Lane. S106 agreement discussions were held last week at a delegated DMC meeting. No contribution to medical practice in Honiton as no evidence that this is required. However, £852,112.50 being proposed for education in Honiton. A contribution to Turk's Head is being negotiated with DCC.

Planning enforcement. The traveller site at Trafalgar Bridge in Weston is now the subject of planning enforcement (ref. 14/F0117) following the planning inspector's decision to dismiss the appeal.

12. Roads report

Stuart Bader again asking that all residents use the online reporting system at Devon County Council to report any potholes. The more reports are made the quicker there is action.

13. Trees, footpaths, hedgerows and drains

Wendy Wayne reporting that work had now been carried out at Treslake which will ease the flow of water and prevent it from backing up onto the road. There is an issue with backed up water further down the road towards Buckerell Farm. Ryan Knight agreeing to speak to Will Pratt about clearing the culvert.

RK

14. Winter Service Review

Heloise Marlow confirming that she has 50 empty sandbags for any residents who need them. It is however the responsibility of the resident to fill these. The new grit bin is yellow rather than green and is ½ full. It was agreed that a letter of thanks would be sent to Kier.

HM

15. Computer Course

Heloise Marlow confirming that only three residents had requested a place on the course. Due to insufficient numbers BPC will not proceed further with this.

16. Telephone Box

Heloise Marlow confirming that Jenny Palfrey had confirmed that she would carry on looking after the telephone box library until the end of December. Thereafter another volunteer will be required. Jenny has confirmed that she usually checks the phone box once a week/fortnight to ensure that it is not overcrowded and to replace any books which have been there for a few months. Twice a year she removes all the books and gives the inside a good clean. HM is to ask for volunteers to take over from Jenny via the village email.

HM

17. Butts Cottage

See above.

18. AOB

It was noted that the Precept request has to be made by 27th January 2015 and HM confirming that she would do this. The Buckerell Parish Council does have funds which need to be spent – it was proposed that Buckerell could enter the Villages in Bloom competition. There is also the land around the Church. The tarmac is ok but the white lines need to be repainted. It was also proposed that Buckerell Parish Council could employ a commercial contractor to do work normally undertaken by the Parish Lengthsman on an invoice basis. Heloise Marlow to ask Councillor Wright whether other villages do this and obtain details.

HM

19. Date of next meeting –

Tuesday 10th February 2015 at 7.30pm at Buckerell Parish Church.

Tuesday 14th April 2015 at 7.30pm at Buckerell Parish Church.

Meeting closed 8.55 p.m.

Signed: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____