

Report from The Chair Buckerell Parish Council May 2021

The past 14 months has been dominated by the Covid-19 global pandemic. Although we are fortunate here in East Devon with cases below the national average and plenty of open spaces, all our lives have undoubtedly been impacted. I cannot imagine how difficult it must have been for parents to home-school their children juggling work commitments, job uncertainty, and those working on the 'frontline' in uncertain times. Notwithstanding the problems for those who had to 'shield' and the impact of social isolation that has affected all of us of all ages.

At the outset of the Covid pandemic David Wayne helped form and Chaired a sub-committee of Buckerell Parish Council known as 'Buckerell On Alert' (BOA). I thank David and the 22 + Volunteers who helped support vulnerable members and Key Workers in our Parish during these difficult times. It highlighted the importance of resilience in the community and very much something in which we should build on in Buckerell in the future.

During the last year the Parish Council has met eight times via Zoom due to Government restrictions on face-to-face meetings. These remote meetings were organised by our very able Parish Clerk, Ian Tucker. Members of the public were of course invited to these open meetings and it has been very much business as usual. The minutes of all our meetings and other useful information can be found on the Buckerell Parish website. I would like to thank Ian for all his commitment and guidance he has given to the Parish Council over the last year.

Ideally there should be 5 or more members on the Parish Council but at times this is difficult to achieve as we all lead busy lives. An enduring face and Vice Chair is Geoff Wright who I give grateful thanks for his good humour, common sense and commitment. Geoff has enlightened me to the importance of the workings of ditches of which there are many in our parish. Water on our road network is problematic at times especially during the colder months and while Devon Highways will clear the grips that drain the water from the road into the ditches it is the responsibility of the adjacent landowner to maintain the ditches. Another water issue has been the broken drain that caused surplus rainwater in the centre of the village at Buckerell Cross. After months of persistent reporting from ex parish councillor David Bowen this was repaired last year by Devon Highways. David was also instrumental in getting potholes repaired and the Parish Council would urge all of you to report any potholes to Devon Highways via the website.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/>

The more a pothole is reported the quicker it will be repaired.

Chris Jacob also retired from the council earlier this year. Chris was Buckerell's first Police Advocacy a useful liaison with the Police and Crime commission. Thank you both for your service to Buckerell. A name many of us are familiar with is Ron Galling. Thank you, Ron, for your commitment over the years.

It is a great example to public life that Susie Bond a District Councillor and Phil Twiss a County and District Councillor attend our Parish Meetings. Their knowledge and connections are a invaluable resource to Buckerell. Among other things Phil helped us to get repairs to the footbridge over the River Otter and has been involved in improving our broadband connections. Susie has been a good friend to Buckerell, addressing local issues and keeping us updated with the Local Plan. Sadly, she is retiring as a District Councillor. On behalf of the Village of Buckerell I would like to thank you both.

Nobody could have failed to notice our pink telephone box which is now gradually turning red. Due to leaks in the glazing this project turned into a major repair and is the handy work of our Village Handyman Steve Triner. If you have any ideas for maintenance of the Village please contact Ian Tucker or any of the Parish Councillors.

We are fortunate in Buckerell that our finances are in a strong position. The annual precept has remained the same as the last two years to reflect this. We have a healthy contingency fund to undertake projects to enhance the village such as resurfacing the area around the War Memorial and we are always welcome any suggestions. We continue to fund the volunteer emergency system for the defibrillator.

Undoubtedly Buckerell greatest resources are fellow residents who quietly or publicly help others in many different ways. On the Parish Council we have two new councillors Helen Hodgson and Sandra Money. Kindy Mann has also declared an interest in joining our merry band. I look forward to working with you all in the coming months and thank you for joining. If anyone would like information on the role of a Parish Councillor or is interested in joining us, please contact Ian Tucker, any of us on the council or come to a meeting. Hopefully, we will soon be meeting once again in Doug's Shed.

In the coming weeks we will be updating our portfolios as Parish Councillors, continue to attempt to resolve issues impacting life in the village and look forward to new challenges to promote the interest and well-being of the Buckerell Community.

Clare Slater
Chair Buckerell Parish Council