

BUCKERELL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the remote meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 17th March 2021 by video conference

Those Present

Clare Slater – Chair (CS)
Geoff Wright – Vice Chair (GW)
Helen Hodgson (HH)
Cllr Philip Twiss – Devon County Council (PT)
Cllr Susie Bond - East Devon District Council (SB)
Ian Tucker - Clerk (IT)

There were no members of the public present.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Ron Galling and Sandra Money.

2. Agreeing the Minutes of the Meeting Held 13th January 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13th January 2021 were agreed as a correct record of that meeting.

3. Co-option of new councillors

Helen Hodgson and Sandra Money were co-opted as councillors by unanimous agreement and welcomed. Ron had previously indicated his approval in a phone call.

4. Matters arising (not on agenda)

None

5. Declarations of interest

a) Helen declared an interest in item 10 on agenda. A family member is on the Honiton Showground committee making the application.

6. Public questions

Clare had received representations from two residents about a stile on the footpath between the telephone box and Glebe Farm. It is in need of repair, and the ideal solution would be a kissing gate, and the landowner had said that this would be acceptable. Clerk will report to Devon Highways.

IT

There had also been questions about responsibility for putting up signage about dog mess on footpaths. This is the responsibility of the landowner

who can obtain signage from the NFU. EDDC have examples of wording and the Clerk will contact them.

IT

7. Finance and Governance

Balance at bank £7013.43 at 1st March 2021

a) Payments approved -

The Community Heartbeat Trust (Paid as previously approved for Year 2 of VETS)	£120
Village Maintenance Contract (Quarterly invoice agreed as previously approved)	£90.25
Ian Tucker – Payment of February and March Zoom invoices. Approved unanimously.	£28.78

IT

8. Councillor Philip Twiss – Report

In what has been a very difficult past year due to the Pandemic there is finally genuine cause for hope that we are emerging from it with the roll out and escalation of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, a reduction of daily cases, hospital and Community deaths and a cautious roadmap in lifting lockdown restrictions, where we can look forward with optimism towards a good summer for us and our Families and friends, as well as the recovery of our Economy.

This report focuses on just two items which I hope will be of interest to members and I also attach for councillors a recent Devon Clinical Commission Group update where I am pleased that the information on vaccinations given was out of date the second the update was published, such is the speed of delivery of the vaccine!

The Government budget has many positives items in it. Not least the continuation of support individuals and businesses on what is sure to be a long road back to recovery. Devon County Council has to set its own budget and below are some key extracts from the 2020/21,169 page budget document.

DCC Budget

Financial targets are set for all the areas of activity that are undertaken by the County Council. Day-to-day expenditure and income are referred to as revenue and investment in assets is referred to as capital.

Elected members approve all budgets of the Authority and throughout the

year monitoring of expenditure and income is undertaken to ensure that spending remains under control.

The funding for the budget currently comes from several sources including Council Tax, business rates and government grants, fees and charges.

The 2021/22 Budget is set in the context of the ongoing Covid-19 global pandemic. The virus has had a devastating impact on public health, social care, the NHS and the economy. The national response has cost billions of pounds and has seen national debt rise to over £2 trillion; levels not seen since the last world war.

In November the Chancellor announced a Government Spending Review (SR2020); it had been hoped that it would be a multi-year spending review, but this was not the case. The one-year spending review was followed in December with a one-year provisional settlement. Whilst not a generous settlement, it is better than it might have been in the current economic climate and has allowed the authority to set a balanced budget with only modest savings being required.

Whilst not a generous settlement, it is better than it might have been in the current economic climate and has allowed the authority to set a balanced budget with only modest savings being required. On the 4th February 2021, the Secretary of State for the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick MP, made a written statement to Parliament on the Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2021/22.

(The 2021/22 local government finance settlement is for one year only and is based on the Spending Round 2020 (SR20). The Final Settlement is £103.2 millions. The main points are set out below:

- Council Tax – As previously announced at Spending Round 2020, the council tax referendum limit will be 2% for local authorities with social care authorities allowed a 3% social care precept. The settlement confirmed districts will be allowed to apply the higher of the referendum limit or £5; **The 2021/22 Band D Council Tax is increased by 4.99% to £1511.28 per household**
- Business Rates Retention – The business rates multiplier has been frozen for 2021/22 resulting in the three elements of the Business Rates Retention system (Baseline Need, NNDR Baseline and Tariff/Top Up amounts) remaining at 2020/21 levels;
- Revenue Support Grant – Has been increased by 0.55%;
- Social Care Funding – Originally announced at SR20, there has been an increase to the Social Care Support Grant of £300 millions nationally. This has been allocated based on Adult Social Care relative need (£60 millions) and the ability to raise resources through the social care precept (£240 millions). There has been no change to the Improved Better Care Fund Grant;

- Rural Services Delivery Grant – There has been an increase of £4 millions nationally, from £81 millions in 2020/21, to £85 millions in 2021/22; with the methodology for distribution remaining unchanged from 2020/21;

- Covid-19 Funding – In SR20, £2.2 billions of funding was announced to support local government in 2021/22, alongside support for local tax income and the spreading of deficits

The Settlement for the authority is:

	£'000
Revenue Support Grant	549
Business Rates Central Government Top Up	80,654
New Homes Bonus	2,486
Rural Services Delivery Grant	7,823
Social Care Support Grant SR20	3,149
Social Care Support Grant SR19	20,160
Improved Better Care Fund	28,271
Covid-19 Funding	14,823
Council Tax Support Grant	6,358

	2020/21		Inflation	Savings &	2021/22 Budget	Net change	
	Adjusted Budget * £000	Pressures £000	& additional Income £000	Budget £000			
				%			
Adult Care & Health	260,757	26,235	(4,557)	282,435	21,678	8.3%	
Children's Services	146,869	13,787	(2,389)	158,267	11,398	7.8%	
Community Health, Environment & Prosperity	39,792	1,039	(958)	39,873	81	0.2%	
Corporate Services	37,566	4,436	(1,615)	40,387	2,821	7.5%	
Highways, Infrastructure Development & Waste	57,827	1,804	(2,111)	57,520	(307)	-0.5%	
	542,811	47,301	(11,630)	578,482	35,671	6.6%	

There is a significant level of uncertainty around the authority's sources of funding after 2021/22, including a new Comprehensive Spending Review (how much Government funding will be available to local government), the fairer funding review (how that Government funding will be shared between different types of authority) and changes to the share of business rates retained locally. There is also the uncertainty of the impact of leaving the EU will have on the wider economy and public sector funding.

In addition, the authority needs to have sufficient reserves and balances to offset the cash spent on the significant projected deficit on the High Needs block for Dedicated Schools Grant.

Food poverty support for Families over Easter and HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD Programme

The DCC holiday food voucher scheme is a way of providing funds to ensure families of children who are eligible for free school meals during term time are able to purchase food over the holidays; to replace the meals a child would have received during a school day.

Devon's level of food insecurity has risen over the past 12 months, with rates of over 20% in Mid Devon, North Devon, and Teignbridge. The scheme will mean almost 16,000 food vouchers will be distributed to those families in need and that qualify.

The offer over the Easter period will be similar to that provided at Christmas and through the recent half term week. The main form of support will be through vouchers (£15 per week per child) which can be redeemed at a range of supermarkets. For families not able to access a supermarket (online or in person) a food parcel will be available.

The voucher scheme will continue to work alongside District Council COVID Hardship Funds, enabling a package of support (e.g. power, travel, advice services) to be awarded to applicants in tandem with food.

Additional funds remain available via the Early Help system so that families in need can be provided with other support alongside food.

The COVID Winter Grant scheme run by Citizens Advice is also continuing, providing households with a grant to help towards energy costs. This helps clients who are facing a choice between heating and eating, this money is designed to cover the 'heating' element for a short period of time.

Devon Community Foundation have also been commissioned to map organisations providing food across Devon and help to build networks of support in each area, ensuring that food and associated needs are coordinated.

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD (HAF) Programme

In November 2020 the Government announced a significant expansion of its tried and tested *Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme*. In areas of high deprivation this programme has provided healthy food and enriching activities during the summer holidays to children who receive benefits-related free school meals (FSM). It offered valuable support to families on lower incomes, giving them the opportunity to access rewarding activities alongside healthy meals over the school holidays.

For 2021 the programme has been expanded to reach all Local Authority areas and will cover the Easter, Summer and Christmas holiday period. As a result, Devon County Council has recently been allocated a substantial grant of up to £1,793,720 to develop, co-ordinate and deliver the programme which will offer:

- An activity and Food programme for children aged 5 -16 years who are

eligible for Free School Meals; with the aim of making it a universal offer where possible.

- The programme will offer inclusive and accessible provision (for example, SEND, young carers, etc).
- The offer will consist of at least 4 hours, for 4 days a week, per child for 4 weeks in the summer, and for one week in Easter and Christmas holidays.

Devon County Council is keen to work with a wide range of partners to maximise resources and opportunities in the development of a county-wide HAF programme. We aim to do this by publicising what's already on offer, upscaling provision where needed and offering support to develop new provision where gaps have been identified.

The Easter programme will focus on the areas of Devon listed below (top 30% deprivation indices) which is approximately 3,000 children. The intention is to roll it out over the whole county for all 16,000 children who wish to attend over the Summer holidays and Christmas period.

9. Councillor Susie Bond – Report

The closing date for the Issues and Options consultation on the revised Local Plan was 15 March, but if the PC is minded to complete the survey, I'm sure your views would be taken into consideration.

Otherwise, Council approved an increase in Council Tax of 3.41%, which represents £5/year for a Band D property. Devon County has increased their element of Council Tax by 4.99% (which includes 3% for adult social care), the Police by 6.73% and Fire by 1.99%. The average Town and Parish precept increase across the district is 2.37%.

Car Park charges across the main car parks in East Devon were set to increase by 20% (i.e. from £1 per hour to £1.20 per hour). However, this increase has been deferred to 2022 in an attempt to help businesses during the Covid recovery.

Meanwhile you will have received a survey on the Community Asset Transfer Procedure. It would be useful to complete even if there are no EDDC assets with the parish, so that EDDC has a complete picture across the district.

IT

Otherwise work continues on coping with Covid and the rollout of business support and discretionary grants, to both businesses and individuals in East Devon.

10. Planning

- a) 20/1808/FUL Owl Cottage Treaslake – Susie had attended the planning committee and reported that the application had been approved.
- b) 20/1636/FUL Workshops at Deer Park Farm – Susie had attended the planning committee and reported that the application had been approved with conditions (Mainly around noise levels, roofing material to be used, and no stacking of containers).
- c) 21/0039/FUL Sunningdale – Councillors noted the revised application. It was agreed that the original comments of the Council still apply and that it should be added that the change from accommodation to storage is a labelling change only. IT
- d) 21/0437/MFUL Showground caravan park – Whilst councillors realised that the proposed camp/caravan site would be of benefit to the local tourism trade several issues were raised with this application – the site is on flood plain; the integrity of the river; traffic concerns; unsightly portaloos; access to the site; and a general lack of detail in the application. It was agreed that Clare would speak with the chair of Gittisham Parish Council to seek their views as the parish within which the application falls. CS

11. Roads Report

- a) The complaint from a resident about the surface water on the road adjacent to Summerhayes Farm was discussed. The Clerk has reported the situation to Devon Highways (W211399031) in addition to a previous report made on behalf of Geoff about the need for a new concrete gully on that stretch of road. An acknowledgement from Devon Highways had been received who will make an assessment. The Clerk will keep the resident updated. IT

12. Trees, Footpaths, Hedgerows and Drains

- a) It was noted that Susie had escalated the situation of the road flooding opposite Westcroft to the County Council. There had been no response to the letter from them. There seems little further that can be done as all avenues have been exhausted. The Clerk has written to the residents who raised the initial concerns apologising for the lack of any result on this matter.

13. Village Maintenance

No report at this time.

14. Meeting Dates going forward

Dates for diaries are as follows (all at 7pm) –

2021

May 5th

July 14th

September 15th

November 17th

2022

January 19th

March 16th

May 18th

15. Matters for next meeting

- a) 30mph speed limit
- b) Code of conduct for Buckerell Parish Council
- c) Planning protocol
- d) Co-option of new councillor

IT

16. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 5th May 7pm (By video conference)