

Minutes of the Virtual Council Meeting held on the Wednesday 24th February 2021

Present Cllr G Underhill (took the chair), Cllr C Steer Cllr R Pearce Cllr S Berry Cllr B Millward and Mrs A Snell clerk

In attendance Cllr A Saywell – County Councillor, Cllr R Lock Cllr M Clarke - District Councillor

Apologies Cllr R Huxtable Cllr D Rogers

Declaration of Interests – Councillors are invited to declare any discloseable pecuniary interest, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting, including protocol for audio/visual recordings a meeting. They are also reminded to consider whether in the light of recent activities any items within their Register of Interests should be updated.

Public Participation.

1.i. The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th January were agreed and signed.

Further information to add to the minutes The trees on the hedge by Green Warren House as reported at the last meeting were reported as safe. But the tree officer has been contacted and has said that tree no 1 is not safe and has been condemned, this has been reported back to the Village Hall Committee.

The problem will come if one tree is removed then the wall may become unsafe. The Parish Council would very much like the Hall Committee to look into this further and obtain more evidence.

2. Clerks Report, i. Web site, www.beafordvillage.org please visit, there are links to the Autumn Show, Church and Village Hall. ii. The Village Green signs are due to be erected soon.

iii. Report on virtual chat with Mr. Michael Newcombe DCC highways, Mr Newcombe said he would send a response following the chat this is awaited. An idea was aired regarding asking Highways to purchase a small strip of land by the Old Post Office to allow for a pavement for safety reasons, Mr Newcombe will be asked.

3. Chairman's Report Play equipment, TK Play have been in contact regarding a sale on some play equipment, but the S106 money has to be used for play equipment/ outdoor amenities, so this has to be awaited before any purchase can be made. Benches. It has been discussed regarding purchasing new benches for the Village Green, 3 benches to sit 3 people also to include a memorial bench, further quotes have been received, regarding purchasing teak benches, one from a company and one from a local supplier. Further discussion took place regarding having a gazebo type structure to cover a bench, and the idea of concrete benches, further investigations are to be undertaken and discussed at the next meeting.

Play equipment, Cllr Pearce is still spraying the equipment weekly,

4. Highway Issues. i. Mr Martin Caddy the Public Right of Way Officer has been to the village, he has replaced some signs. Regarding the Halsdon footpath, one letter and one email have been received. The footpath sign by the river needs to be replaced as it is broken from Beaford Wood on the Beaford Mill side. Mr Caddy has more walks around the Parish to do and assess.

ii. The street light at Shepherds Meadow has been repaired

The DCC website is devon.cc/report-it

5. County and District Councillors items, Cllr Saywell reported that the statistics, –tats – As of 24th February DCC area of Devon now up to 19,157 coronavirus infections since the start of the pandemic. Since the 19th February that is a weekly increase of 290 infections. By way of comparison... in Torridge there were 7 new infections in the last 7 days, North Devon 21 in the last 7 days, West Devon 5 cases in the last 7 days. There are now over 20,000 tests a week being carried out in the County. In all 18 Parishes within Torrington Rural there were 0-3 new infections in the seven days up to 19th February. When there are fewer than 3 infections the Government does not show the data to protect individuals' identities. So the good news

is... infection cases have fallen sharply during the lockdown locally, District-wide and County-wide. **Locally we are still doing incredibly well to keep our infection rates low. Devon has the lowest upper-tier shire county infection rate in England (36.1). Torrington has the second lowest infection rate in England (10.3), just behind West Devon (9),** with only the Shetland and Orkney Islands recording a lower infection rates in the UK.

However, these numbers can change quickly, and while the falling infection rates are good news, new infection cases are still around the same level now as they were towards the end of September. Infection cases in Devon are highest among the 20 to 39 year old age group. But they all falling in all age groups, and most rapidly with the over 80s.

We are however still seeing the virus spreading in some workplaces, often attributable to car sharing. We have also seen some localised spikes in the County, with one recently in Tiverton which caused a rise in the infection rates in Mid Devon. If car sharing is essential please follow the recommended guidance about reducing the risk to yourselves and fellow passengers – guidance can be found online [here](#). Key workers should also look to use Community Testing sites when they become available (more information below).

As infections fall and vaccinations ramp up, we must not let our guard down now. Please **stay at home**, and only leave home if you absolutely have to. When you do go out, **don't** forget to **socially distance, wear a face covering in indoor public spaces and wash your hands regularly**. While numbers are so low it doesn't take much, a few cases in a couple of workplaces, for the figures to go in the wrong direction and to see a high percentage increase, **so keeping to the rules is still very important.** **Community Testing** DCC has started to roll out Community Testing for coronavirus, with testing facilities now in Barnstaple and Exeter. Community testing will help to find individuals who have COVID-19 but do not have symptoms and need to isolate and who may inadvertently be spreading the virus. A positive or negative result will not remove the need to follow existing COVID measures socially and in the workplace. Rapid lateral flow tests will be used, which will provide a result within thirty minutes. This will not be a substitute for the national coronavirus testing – **if you are symptomatic, people should book a free NHS test via the GOV.UK website or by calling 119. Do not use community testing.** Other sites are planned to become available across the County in February and March. Sites are being targeted at areas with higher levels of the virus first.

Plans are afoot to have a mobile testing facility to cover Torrington, Holsworthy, Hartland and Bradworthy up and running in March, dates to be determined. The aim is to have testing as accessible as it can be. When this is up and running locally, please use [devon.cc/testing](https://www.devon.gov.uk/testing) to book a test.

Please remember, if you have symptoms book a test through the Government website. Don't use DCC Community Testing.

COVID Vaccinations The rollout of the vaccine in Devon and in Torrington Rural has, so far, been going very well.

I sent a briefing note to the Parish Council earlier this week but the main points for vaccine rollout: 342,397 people in Devon received their first vaccine dose between 8th December – 14th February Latest estimate is 95% of over 70s in Devon have received their first dose. Plans are now being made to roll out second doses for care home residents and staff. **Torrington's GP Surgeries now administering vaccines locally** – Castle Gardens surgery held their first Covid vaccine clinic on Saturday 23rd January and plans are afoot to have a constant Covid clinic running throughout the week. They are targeting those that they know cannot make it to Barnstaple or other vaccine centres.

People who are 65 or over can also choose to book direct with the pharmacy site at Westward Ho! on the national booking system. Vaccinations of inpatients at the North Devon District Hospital is also taking place.

Even when you have been vaccinated, you must still continue to follow the COVID-19 safety rules – stay at home as much as possible and remember hands, face, space. The NHS is also looking at mobile roll out for more isolated rural communities. This remains a huge logistical exercise, very much dependent upon the speed and rate of vaccine supplies. Please wait for the NHS to contact you when it is your turn. The roll out is getting more localised, those who cannot travel far should be able to get their jab administered locally.

Covid-19 Prompt Action Grant A reminder that DCC's COVID-19 grants have opened again for the third lockdown but will close on **March 5th**. The guidance is slightly amended and can be found on this link along with the online application form. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/document/covid-19-fund/>

The biggest difference to the first two waves is that DCC are working in partnership with Devon Community Foundation to fund food projects. So any project that is for food provision needs to apply here <http://devoncf.com/apply/community-food-programme-2/>

DCC Budget The main work over January and February at the County Council has been the budget setting process. The Budget was approved at Full Council on the 18th February with more cash for vulnerable adults and children, health and potholes. Key points: £37m extra cash injection into vital services, including an additional £21.7m for Adult Care and Health, and £11.4m for Children's Services. For Highways there will be an injection of extra revenue into the service including £600,000 for potholes and a new £100,000 fund for Town and Parishes to enhance street features.

An additional £600,000 into the Hardship Fund, to be distributed to the District Councils, to help people badly affected by the pandemic who may have been made redundant but are not yet receiving universal credit or benefit support.

The total overall revenue budget will be in excess of £578m. To help pay for these increases, Council Tax will unfortunately have to rise – up 1.99% for general services and 3% dedicated solely to Adult Social Care. This will equate to an extra £1.38 a week for an average Band D household. I know Council Tax rises are never welcome... but this will mean we both maintain vital services and can endeavour to improve them. The backdrop to the budget is one of huge uncertainty and risk – we do not know how long the pandemic will continue for or what the longer term impact on the economy, public health and demand for services will be.

Free School Meals Voucher Schemes Over Half Term DCC will provide more than 15,000 children's families in Devon with food vouchers. Families of children currently receiving free school meals were automatically sent supermarket vouchers by DCC to help them buy food over the week-long holiday to replace the meals a child would have received during term-time. This was for more than 15,000 children in the County. The vouchers – worth £15 a week for each child – can be redeemed in major supermarkets across Devon. Arrangements were put in place for families who cannot get to a supermarket.

Highways Due to the inclement weather there is a large backlog of potholes to repair. Extra Gangs are being deployed to fix these however they are prioritising safety defects on the main road network first, ahead of minor roads and non-safety defects and serviceability patching. There have also been localised flooding incidents on the highways around Torrington Rural though these are being reported and being attended to.

I was pleased to have helped organise the meeting with Michael Newcombe. I have also been dealing with a street lighting issue in the village which, thankfully, now appears to be resolved! If there have been any other urgent highways issues in Beaford then let me know and I will look into it for you.

Elections The Government have confirmed that the May Elections to Devon County Council **will** be taking place on May 6th. I will be re-standing and am hopeful of re-election! I have worked hard for Beaford in the last four years and together I believe we have achieved a lot, particularly with the resurfacing of the A3124 and the repairs to the drain at the bus shelter that has stopped the flooding. Though as ever there is still more to do. I will remain at your service until May, and I hope to be afterwards as well. If re-elected my priority will be working on repairing some of the more rural roads in the Parish.

Cllr Lock reported on the proposed development at Towell Meadow, Cllr Lock has spoken to the planning officer to get an update on the ecology of the application, also contact has been made with the Conservation officer which was positive, highways still have objections. The Parish council were asked if the development was passed what objectives they have regarding the S106.

Cllr Clarke was thanked for the Green signs, he reported on the budget that TDC have set, on average £5 per household but most of TDC properties are in the lower band rates. Cllr Clarke also reported that the car parking fees for Appledore and Westward Ho are to be increased, Council Tax and car parking are the only two allocations of revenues TDC has full control over.

6. Tennis Court, everything is in hand with the new set up.

7. Finance, i Approve and sign the following cheque: -

493	Flagmakers	£84.57
494	Mr. R Horner	£55.00

8.i. Planning

P C recommendations

TDC

1/0279/2020/ OUT	Outline application with all matters reserved for the erection of up to 14 dwellings (affecting a public right of way) Land at Towell Lane	
1/0118/2021/ FUL	Proposed roof over existing yard. - Land At Upcott Farm Beaford	Cllr Underhill declared a prejudicial interest and left the room; no objections from Councillors.
1/0181/2021/ LBC	Part retrospective application for conversion of additional barn into ancillary accommodation, retention of patio, erection of wooden fence, alterations to front wall and roof lights, demolition of lean to agricultural building and implementation of new boundary wall. The Old Corn Barn, Beaford,	This application was discussed by councillors, councillors were very disappointed that this is a retrospective application when full planning was obtained on the first barn, planning needs to be sought in the first instance to be respectful of other people and the area. No objections to this application.

9. Police Report, it was reported in the last 30 days there have been 2 crimes, one violence without injury and one criminal damage. And two phone calls where logs were crated, one transport and one public safety.

10. Ways to improve the Village and Parish Environment, this will be deferred until the spring.

11. Caretakers Report & Hall report. The spraying of the play equipment is being undertaken once this week; a parishioner has volunteered to undertake some of the Snow Warden duties by distributing the salt around the Village, Mr Sam ?????? will be volunteering on behalf of the Parish Council

The Hall has now got the heating engineers in putting in the new heating system, regular users have been contacted regarding reopening. The hall has been painted etc. The earliest opening date is the 15th May but may be considered safer in June.

The hedge coming out of the village on the right towards Torrington was discussed as it is overgrown but not it seems impending the highway as yet.

10. Correspondence i. DALC Newsletters have been circulated.

ii. The Police newsletters have been circulated.

Date of next meeting: **Wednesday 24th March 2021** Parish Council virtual meeting **7.30pm**

.....Chairman.....Date

Forthcoming meeting: Wednesday 21st April 2021 Parish Council virtual meeting.
Wednesday 5th April for the Annual Parish Council meeting