

BEAFORD PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the
Wednesday 30th November 2022

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

In attendance - Cllr R Lock Cllr Clarke District Councillors

Apologies, Cllr R Huxtable Cllr J Palmer Cllr Saywell County Councillor and PCSO Brown

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 26th October were agreed and signed
2. Clerks Report, i. Councillors are encouraged to apply for grants. ii. Wicksteed report the requirements have been undertaken.
3. Chairman's Report i. The Village Green is looking good, the benches are to be finished when the weather improves. The Wicksteed reported findings has been completed
ii. The site meeting for the flashing speed signs with Mr Mark James Highway Superintendent and Cllr Saywell was very well attended and constructive. The Torrington end of the village an existing pole can be utilised, the Dolton end a resident has very kindly agreed to site the post, a safety management form has to be completed, and Cllr Huxtable is to update his Chapter 8 training, three quotes have been obtained it was agreed to all assess the quotes and make a decision at the next meeting.
4. Highway Issues. i. There are no major problems with footpaths, but an email is to be sent to ensure the correct footpath was looked at recently.

The DCC website is devon.cc/report-it

5. County and District Councillors items Cllr Saywell

Cllr Lock was asked to send on good wishes to Cllr **Recruitment of Chief Executive** – I am pleased to report that the Appointments Panel was able to make a unanimous decision in appointing a new Chief Executive, Donna Manson, who is currently the Chief Executive of Highland Council in Scotland – the UK's largest rural authority. She has a track record of improvement, best value and successful budget delivery, rebuilding substantial reserves and resilience within the Highland Council, while implementing significant investment projects. Her background is in Education and Children's Services in three Scottish councils, having started her career in teaching where she was also a 'trouble-shooter' Head Teacher.

The decision should be ratified by Full Council on the 8th December, with Donna due to start in mid-February. She has already had meetings with senior directors already, including the Director of Finance, so should be in a position to hit the ground running when she formally joins us next year.

Budgets - You will probably have seen the media coverage now about this. The projected £40m overspend for this financial year has been brought down to £6m... but that has been achieved through having to make savings on existing budgets this year and postponing long term projects in IT and recruitment etc. However the Children's Services Budget continues to overspend and every possible effort is being made to contain and reverse the overspend but it is not easy.

Nonetheless, we should be able to balance the books for this financial year... the challenge is going to be next year. Prior to the Autumn Statement we were looking at a projected budget gap of £60m,

which on top of the £15m planned savings identified in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, means that we are looking at overall projected savings of £75m.

The numbers are still being crunched but it looks as though the Autumn Statement has been favourable to DCC. However, difficult decisions will still need to be taken to deliver a balanced budget. Unlike a lot of central government institutions, local government has to balance our budget every financial year by law. If we do overspend, then that has to be covered from reserves or some other external income stream. If we can't, we have to issue what is called a Section 114 notice which, in effect, means the local authority becomes bankrupt.

Needless to say, a bankrupt council cannot help anyone. The £75m savings can be achieved but it will mean deep and painful cuts as the Council Leader has already outlined.

This is not a problem that is unique to Devon. It is a national issue, from speaking to colleagues across the country their budget problems are similar, and many actually are worse! Cornwall's budget deficit for next year is £62million (they are smaller than Devon), Plymouth is facing similar problems. Further afield, Norfolk County Council has a £60m budget gap for this year. Kent's is £70m.

Inflation has been the main driver for a lot of these cost pressures, with some sectors such as Highways actually experiencing hyperinflation.

Non Budget Matters

Cost of Living Help – Devon has received a further £5m funding to help households weather the rising costs of living, with help to pay for food, energy and other essential items. More information about this is online here - [Councils to receive additional funds to help support households with rising food and energy costs - News \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

Support for Children during school holidays – Free holiday activities with hot meals are now available for children during the Christmas 2022 holidays. All children are eligible to register, although priority places will be given to children aged five to 16 years old (or four-year-olds, if in reception), who are eligible for and receiving benefit-related free school meals and their families. More information available online here - [HAF providers – Christmas 2022 – Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

Devon Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy – A public consultation is being held on the draft Devon Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy. This consultation aims to find out your views on the draft strategy and its recommendations. Information about the Strategy can be found online here - [Devon Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy - Have Your Say](#)

Cllr Lock said please encourage any residents needing help with the cost-of-living crisis to see what is available on The TDC website, including energy, water etc. There has been no update on the Towell Lane mobile home, Cllr Lock has spoken to Helen Smith regarding the 18 property development at Towell Lane, there is to be an inclusion of off-site diversity within the ownership of the applicant in Beaford, the S106 is nearing conclusion, with a contribution for the hall of £25,449.26 this can be used to resurface the car park. The development has a village green which the Parish council are not willing to have responsibility for. On looking at the plans and raising the issue of car parking it was suggested could part on the site be a car park Cllr Lock is to take the suggestion back to TDC, it would be a great asset to the village, Cllr Underhill is to ask also a letter from the Parish Council is to be sent.

Cllr Clarke is no longer a Conservative councillor, but has decided to be independent, and will be so at the next election in May. Cllr Clarke reported that TDC has identified 10 sites owned by TDC to develop for affordable rental social housing for local people, these sites are going out to feasibility studies, grants are being applied for £1.5 million to start the housing project. The South Street car park site in Torrington will not be suitable. Plans are in place for street people who are homeless to go into pods, funding has been secured but the money must be used by next March. Cllr Clarke has funds available in the Councillor grant which can be applied for.

6. Tennis Court, very positive reports are being received, with around 25 members at present, the legal completion has yet to be finalised.

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

548	Beaford Village Hall	£12.00
549	Wicksteed	£144.00
550	Beaford Village Hall reissue cheque lost	£12.00

- i. Consider grass cutting tender, the quote from Mr M Baker is £1065 for the Green and other areas, and £20 per cut for the area around the Tennis Court, proposed by Cllr Steer, seconded by Cllr Pearce all in favour to accept.
- ii. Agree the Precept, it was proposed by Cllr Millward seconded by Cllr Pearce to keep the precept unchanged at £6500, all in favour.

8.i. Planning

P C recommendations

TDC

1/0279/2020/OUT	Outline application with all matters reserved for the erection of up to 18 dwellings (affecting a public right of way) Land at Towell Lane		
1/0794/2022/FUL	Part retrospective application for the erection of implement shed and agricultural storage building land at grid reference 254814 115022, Beaford		
1/0939/2022/FUL	Proposed new access track off existing access and associated works (re-submission of application 1/0049/2022/FUL) Mount Pleasant Cottage, Beaford,		Passed
1/0782/2022/LBC	Replacement window, Yatton Court, Beaford.		
1/1071/2022/FUL	Proposed extension and internal alterations Latchford, Beaford	On looking at the plan's councillors would support the proposal on the conditions that the window overlooking other properties gardens has frosted glass, and the stairs need to be positioned as to not impede onto the footpath, not as recorded on the applicants plans.	

9. Police Report, no crimes have been reported in the last 30 days but 5 calls have been logged, 3 concerns of welfare, 1 alarm sounding and 1 road traffic collision damage only. Speedwatch has not been undertaken in the past two weeks but will be resumed soon.

10. Ways to improve the Village and Parish Environment.

11. Caretakers Report & Hall report. The Hall AGM was held the night before, 3-4 members have joined, bringing along new ideas, suggested an event for the Kings Coronation with the Hall, Autumn Show committee and possibly the Parish council working together on the project. The new exterior doors have all been approved, the fire escape has been made more compliant with regulations, Mrs E Pearce has offered to edit the Bugle for which she was thanked. The numerous pot holes on the car park was raised it was suggested to obtain some plainings to put down, Mr Mark James is to be contacted. The Christmas Market is on the 10th December, the School play on the 8th December.

12. Correspondence

i. The DALC newsletters have been circulated.

ii. The weekly crime reports have been circulated.

There has been a request for a street light going down from the hall to the junction as it is a very dark area, also, one on St Georges Lane these will be requested. There has been an email regarding the fact that there is no access for wheelchairs or prams on the pavement on the right exiting Rye Park, also to be requested.

It has been raised by parishioners regarding the dangers for mothers with toddlers walking along Green Lane to the school the suggestion was for a track of some sort along the hedge on the Village Green, but it was felt this would cause too many issues with Health and Safety, the alternative which

was used in covid was access along Rye Park into the playing field this is be put to the relevant people.

A letter has been received from a parishioner regarding his concerns at the lack of compliance of the fire escape in the hall, this has been addressed.

Date of next meeting: **Wednesday 18th January 2023** in the Parish Hall **7.30pm**

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

Forthcoming meeting: Wednesday 22nd February 2023 Parish Council meeting.