

BEAFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the Wednesday 27th April 2022

Cllr G Underhill (took the chair)

Present Seven members of the public and members of the Parish Council

Cllr S Berry, Cllr J Palmer Cllr R Huxtable Cllr R Pearce Cllr B Millward Cllr C Steer and Mrs A Snell clerk

In attendance Cllr M Clarke and Cllr R Lock

Apologies Cllr A Saywell Mike Hurley 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.

1. The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on the 5th May 2021 were agreed and signed

2. Chairman' Report. This is the Annual Parish Meeting report on the year from May 2021 until April 2022. The Annual parish Council Meeting in 2021 was the last meeting after the pandemic to be held on zoom. In May 2021 a virtual chat was once again held with Mr Michael Newcombe from DCC Highways with a follow up meeting again with Mr Newcombe plus Mr James Anstee the County Road Safety Manager and Mr Andrew Saywell our District Councillor, all of whom were in the view that downgrading the road back to a B road would not decrease traffic volumes and would see the amount of maintenance and repairs done on the road reduced as it would no longer be a A road.

Sandra Brown from Devon and Cornwall Police is currently trying to get volunteers for Speedwatch together to complete training with the correct knowledge and equipment so then the volunteers will be able to carry out CSW on their own. The Village green parking has presented its own problems once again especially at school drop off and pick up times. The Council liaised with Beaford School with and it was decided a sign was to be erected at the entrance of the Village Green stating there was No Parking to help eradicate the problem. The Village Green parking is currently under discussion, the Council are very aware of the shortage of car parking within the village but with no solution to this growing problem. Four benches have been purchased for the village, two have replaced broken ones on the Village Green, one has been situated at the end of Rye Park Close after approval was sought from Torridge. The Fourth bench is to be sited at the end of Biddamoor Lane. A new picnic table has been bought for the Village Green and a youth shelter to commemorate the Queens Platinum Jubilee will be erected in May 2022 along with a Copper Beech tree. Grass, and hedge cutting throughout the village, including the tennis court continue to be maintained.

Mr J. Spilstead represented the Beaford short mat Bowling Club reporting the club was short of funds, Five Hundred Pounds was proposed and passed by the council to support the club. Mr. R Horner also attended a meeting representing the Beaford Skittles Club regarding the purchase of a new skittle alley as the present one was unsuitable for competitions, Five Hundred Pounds was also proposed and passed to assist the club. It was generally felt these clubs are of great benefit to the village. £500 has been given to the church towards the grass cutting of the churchyard. Footpaths are under monthly discussions with regular contact between the Parish Council and the footpath warden, the footpaths in the parish are continually checked by our own footpath councillor. Letters from the public were sent to Highways regarding a closure of a footpath between Beaford and Harepath Woods but nothing has been resolved to this date. In January 2022 a vacancy on the parish Council was filled by Mr J. Palmer, welcome John.

A cheese and wine evening was hosted by the Parish Council in January for residence of Beaford to put forward ideas for the Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in the village. This meeting was well attended and Mr D. Buswell was proposed and accepted as Chairman of the Jubilee committee. The Parish Council have donated Four Hundred and Thirty-Four pounds to the Jubilee committee for commemorative coins for the children of the parish. Two grants from Councillors Lock and Clarke have been donated totalling Four Hundred Pounds. The Jubilee Committee have plans for a wonderful Jubilee weekend for the village to enjoy. Thank you to the committee for all their hard work towards this project. The Village Green play area is continued to be enjoyed by the younger members of the village and has continually been maintained and disinfected throughout the past year. Wickstead has done its yearly inspection on the play equipment and has been passed without any issues. The Parish Council would like to offer their gratitude to the Beaford Village Hall committees dedicated and voluntary workers as they do a wonderful job in keeping the hall and the field maintained for us all to use and enjoy, the Beaford Village Hall are looking to expand the committee so, if anyone is interested! I am delighted to be able to report that the Parish Council, hall and school all have a good working relationship with each other.

Climate Emergency meetings, parish council training along with planning and highways workshops have all been attended throughout the past year either by zoom or individuals attending the meetings. Thanks: must be given on behalf of Beaford and its Parish Council to Councillors Saywell, Lock and Clarke for their continued advice help and support along with PCSO Brown for regular attendance and police reports, Mrs Angela Snell the Beaford Parish Council clerk for all her dedicated time and expertise on parish legalities. We would also like to offer out thanks to Mr. T. Vanstone and Ms. S Doyle at Torridge. To conclude my report I would like to offer my personal thanks to the members of the parish Council for their continued hard work and dedication in supporting the village and myself. Vice Chair – Mrs C. Steer Mr B. Millward - Village website, environmental issues and tech expert Mr R. Pearce - Church representative and village caretaker Mr R. Huxtable - Footpaths, representative on Beaford Tennis Club committee Village green and Bus Shelter Mr S. Berry - Village hall representative and conservation Mr J. Palmer - Highways and general maintenance

As Chair I look forward to continuing seeing you at the monthly parish meeting where you know you are always welcome. Regards to you all, G.S. Underhill Chairperson of Beaford Parish Council

3. Financial Report, Parish Council funds at present stand at £14,243.72

4. Village Hall report, the past 12 months have been marked as one of recovery and renewal.

Recovery in as far as the hall has been getting the regular groups back into the hall, slowly rebuilding the monthly coffee mornings and market and attempting to regain some momentum in hosting events. Existing groups have returned and new ones started up. The renewal has been more extensive. Following on from the installation of our heating system the committee have had the hall redecorated, changed lighting to more efficient LED bulbs and re-organised the store room to be more accessible and more easily used by our regular users. The field has been left for regular mowing as it is to be used for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee celebrations. Once complete then the committee shall re-evaluate its use. The committee, though small, has increased in number with its latest member Sophie Kos. She joins Mike Hurley(chairman), Vince Webb (Treasurer), Alan Jones (Secretary), Cathy Millward (Bookings) and Bruce Millward with our Parish council representative Simon Berry. Obviously more members needed as there is very little spare capacity should any of the committee be absent for any reason. The committee would like to extend its' warmest thanks to those individuals who help in so many different ways, from kitchen work, maintenance, heavy lifting and a myriad of other jobs. Without them the hall would not function. Also, the committee would like to thank Gill Underhill and the rest of the Parish Council for all their support and assistance over these previous years. The future is guided by further renewal of the fabric of the hall, with windows, doors and the south facing exits a priority. There is also a need to review the finance of the hall, especially the charging structure which has remained in place for a very long time. The set-up of the hall charity is also under review, although good work has already been put in place. Finally, the committee would like to thank the people of Beaford for their continued support for the hall and its committee, the report

was put together by Mike Hurley, Chairman.

5. Police report, over the past two years there has been 22 crimes in the parish ranging from stalking and harassment, violence without injury to public order offences, the crimes recorded for the previous two years 2019 to 2021 were 21 so a rise of 4.8%. The incidents recorded from 2020 to 2022 were 73 the majority being public safety and transport related, compared to 72 in the previous two years.

6. County and District Councillors reports Cllr Saywell reported his apologies for being away on holiday otherwise he would have attended tonight's meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting is a chance to look back on the past year and the first thing I would like to say is **thank you**. Thank you to you, the people of Beaford, for re-electing me as your County Councillor. It is a fantastic privilege to represent Beaford and the 17 other communities that make up Torrington Rural at County Hall, and I have worked hard to repay that trust and to represent all the residents of the Parish to the best of my ability. Since the election my role on the County Council has changed with the Leader, Cllr John Hart, appointing me to the Cabinet with the portfolio of 'Organisational Development, Workforce and Digital Transformation'. In layman's terms, it means I'm responsible for HR services, internal DCC IT, and helping to shape the corporate focus and aims of the Council. It has been a big step up in responsibilities, but one that I have relished. I have also used, when it has been appropriate, this new platform to draw attention to my Cabinet colleagues and Senior Officers the problems that still need addressing here in Torrington Rural. After the elections in May, we reverted back to face to face meetings. However, Zoom and Teams meetings have continued and we have settled down into a more hybrid way of working. DCC staff are slowly starting to come back more to the offices. This is something that comes under my Cabinet portfolio – and what I am determined to achieve is that we get the best of both worlds. There are advantages to home/remote and virtual working, but there are also advantages to being back in an office environment as well. There will be an element of trial and error going forward but I expect we will start to see Council staff in the office 2-3 days a week. I mentioned the pandemic earlier, and although lockdown restrictions were finally lifted in the past year, Covid has not gone away. But the vaccines have made it possible to revert back to a degree of normality that without them, I suspect we would still all be on Zoom. In the first phase of the pandemic Devon had consistently some of the lowest infection rates in the country. This year, we have often been one of the higher rates, partly I suspect because we were so successful in keeping the virus at bay during the first phase. But with vaccinations, despite that high infection rate we have kept our overall hospital rate low and thankfully deaths have been far lower than what they would have been. Devolution has been on the agenda in the past year and Devon was shortlisted for a County Deal, along with 7 other areas. The Council will be submitting an ambitious proposal to Government.... We are not proposing to have an elected mayor but we are asking for greater powers and discussions have now started with the Government. We will see what happens!

An ongoing theme continues to be budgetary and financial constraints on the Council. DCC's turnover is £1.5 **billion** a year and the revenue budget is in excess of £600 million. Yet of the money DCC spends, 76% of it ends up going on just over 3% of the population. These are on people on care packages, adults with disabilities, children in care, etc. Coming out of the pandemic, the demands on our 'people' services is going to be greater than ever, which in turn puts pressure on the budgets of the non-people services like Highways. The challenge for us as a Council is not to go around cutting support for Adult Social Care but to look at how we can do things differently, and more effectively, so that our limited budgets can go further. That will be the strategic priority facing the County Council this coming year. Along with this DCC is working hard with the District Councils to help settle Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war. And along with these issues I will continue to work with the Parish Council to address ongoing local matters, particularly around Highways. Last year I organised a meeting with Highways to discuss ongoing traffic and road safety issues in the village. There are no quick and easy solutions to these problems but we are looking at getting some limited yellow lines installed which should, I hope, help improve the flow of traffic through the village. As ever, if there are any County Council matters you would like me to look into please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Cllr Lock reported the last two years have been a challenge to all, but now hopefully we are gradually coming back to normal but we must not forget that covid is still around. I personally enjoyed zoom

meetings, but I know some did not it enabled me to attend more than one meeting a night, as on a Wednesday, each month I have 3 Parish Council meetings. Beaford has had its own challenges but the Parish Council have been very professional and proactive in how they have dealt with them. Like every other 7 of the Parish Councils within my ward you always discuss parking, speeding traffic, dog poo and planning, it is a problem wherever you go. I look forward to seeing the erection of the new youth shelter on the Village Green which can be used by all ages which will complement the excellent play facility that Beaford has in place already. As always if anyone has any problems then please contact me. grannylockrocks@gmail.com

Cllr Clarke reported that after two and a half years TDC have passed the Armed Forces Covenant Act. Cllr Clarke is on the sub planning committee dealing with Affordable and Social housing they are looking at changing things, all parishes will be consulted for the views of the parishes. Cllr Clarke is also the lead member for refugees including Ukraine, Hong Kong, Syria and others.

7. Report from the Skittles club, the Parish Council was thanked for the £500 grant towards the new skittle alley made by Rodger Horner being lighter and much easier to manoeuvre, the old alley was sold. The club meets Thursday evenings from 7-9 pm at a cost of £3 to pay for the hall and tea, any funds remaining has been sent to the Ukraine fund. Thank you to club members for getting the club going and the continued support.

Report from Beaford PCC the past year has been difficult with the Covid crisis but there have been plusses and minuses, the church has been open since last July for weekly Sunday services and open for visitors daily between 9-4pm. As the Church warden I am very encouraged by the increase of the congregation to an average of 15 people attending Sunday services, on Easter Sunday there were over 30 in attendance. Apart from the weekly Sunday service, there is a meeting on a Monday for coffee and pastries with the rector with an average of 12 people attending and enjoying a chat. The monthly coffee morning in the Village Hall has also resumed, after hire charge generating an income of approximately £85.00 John Spilstead has also continued to generate an income from the 200 club. Over the past year there have been repairs to the Bell Tower, to keep the rain out and stop the deterioration of the inside wall of the church, there has been an extensive clean and tidy up of the church. Forward planning is to have a meeting area in the church with tea and coffee making facilities, and to have a toilet in the church grounds with will be beneficial to church goers, the children's play area and public. The idea has been applied to the DAC who have been to inspect the site and shown great interest and encouragement for the project. Beaford church has approximately £5000 in its current account as working capital and £4500 in restricted accounts (only to be used for church building) as we know every large and old building and grounds have financial costs e.g. tree maintenance, grass cutting, general maintenance (boiler etc.) The biggest problem for Beaford church grounds recently are the trees, one tree has been taken down due to disease and three others have been lopped due to dangerous limbs, the church does appreciate this has not always satisfied the neighbours of the churchyard but we are in a conservation area and if permission to remove a tree or reduce its size is not granted by TDC then the tree can only have work done on it as permitted by them. But on a happier note, Beaford church has recently had its AGM and there are now six members on the PCC who are working hard to bring Beaford Church to the community of Beaford of whom the church belongs. Beaford church thanks everyone who have continued to make regular donations, and to those who make donations when they can, whether they are church goers or not, and to Beaford PC for their donations, without these donations Beaford Church would not survive. The church has just had its Quintennial Inspection by the Architect, this would happen every five years but due to covid has been delayed this inspection is at a cost of £1000 and will inform us if there are any major structural concerns. This report has not been received yet. A copy of the Beaford Church Annual report was submitted to the Exeter Diocese.

8. Report from the Tennis Club Mr Hartford has left and proposed that the Parish Council take ownership of the land under the tennis Court with the members taking on the assets. More Trustees are required, the process is still being set up, there is only one meeting a year to sign off the accounts and order new balls, Katie Farr is the secretary and will be sending out details of membership shortly.

It was raised the demise of the Beaford Cricket club that has been going since 1969 with founder members of Mr Pengelly, Mr Alan Berry and Mr Mandley, a cricket match is to be played for the Jubilee celebrations, in the past the Cricket club has been a real asset tot eh community. Cllr Lock reported the Dolton football club ceased but with the new house and influx of new residents it has started up again.

Report on the Short Mat Bowls Club in July 2021 Mr Spilstead attended a Parish council meeting and requested a grant towards a new bowling mat winder, as the existing one was beyond economic repair. The Parish Council kindly granted the bowls club £500 which kick started the fundraising project. In late July an application was submitted to the DCC Reconnect, Rebuild and Recovery grant scheme and was successful with the application, this money was paid through the Parish Councils bank account. In September a grant was obtained from Viscount Amory and this along with a generous anonymous donation allowed us to order the new equipment that we desperately needed. The new triple mat winder was delivered in November and now any tow club members can unroll and roll up the bowling mats, the old amt winder took at least four members to operate and was a health and safety risk. In late November the club purchased a second-hand bowling amt and fenders from Christchurch bowling club who were disbanding. We have recently joined Devon Short Mat Bowling Association. This provides all our members with Personal Accident insurance and we have also taken out Civil and Public Liability Insurance. This covers all our equipment for fire or accidental damage whilst it is stored in the Village Hall store as their insurance policy only covers their equipment. The club is now in a stable financial position and we now have the mats and equipment to enable the club to expand and support additional members.

As there was no further business the meeting was closed.

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