

BEAFORD PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the
Wednesday 17th January 2024

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

In attendance - Cllr Elliott District Councillor and Cllr Saywell County Councillor and a member of the public

Apologies Cllr J Palmer Cllr R Lock and PCSO Brown

Declaration of Interests – Councillors are invited to declare any disclosable 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.

Mr Rodgers attended the meeting to inform councillors that he had been given incorrect information regarding his hardcore field track at grid reference 255452-115152, in the fact that he did not require planning permission when in fact he does for the first 20m as the barn application was under a Class Q, hence the reason for the retrospective application, Mr Rodgers was thanked for attending.

1.i. The Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November were agreed and signed.

2. Clerks Report,

i. Wicksteed Report, there are two items that require attention, a net connector on the bird's nest needs to be replaced and a post on one of the swings, TK Play will be contacted again to do the net connector, and the post will be replaced.

ii. Changes to the Post Office service in Beaford, an email has been received "The Post Office are changing the current Outreach services at Beaford and Atherington. We are replacing these services and introducing a Mobile service. The Mobile van will operate from the car parks at same locations. The current Outreach service at Beaford, operating from the Beaford Village Hall, Beaford, Winkleigh, EX19 8LU, will cease from 13:00 on Thursday 25 January 2024. The new Mobile service will commence from 11:30 on Tuesday 30 January 2024."

So, the new mobile service will be on a Tuesday at 11.30, in the hall car park.

It seems other people use the car park for stop off's once a month, a wool supplier.

3. Chairman's Report i. The Village Green, the Copper Beech is growing well, the benches will be oiled again in the spring, Cllr Huxtable has kindly offered to pressure wash the bus shelter. The rubbish bin at the end of Coombe Lane was highlighted again as being overflowing.

ii. Flashing speed sign, the sign has been purchased for 12 months a site is available at the Torrington end of the village, all safety procedures will be carried out for the sign to be erected.

4. Defibrillators, Parish Councillors would like to thank Dennis Buswell very much for all his help in getting the two new defibrillators installed, working and registered in such a short time. They look excellent and very prominent. With regard to the invoice for the electrical installation it was proposed by Cllr Huxtable seconded by Cllr Underhill for the Parish Council to pay the invoice it being £342.48 plus VAT, all in favour. The old one from outside the school has yet to find a location for installation.

The DCC website is [devon.cc/report-it](https://www.devon.gov.uk/report-it) PLEASE REPORT or ring 0345 1004 115

5. Highway Issues. i. Cllr Huxtable reported a tree has fallen down on footpath 16 by the river this will be reported.

ii. The voluntary post of Road Warden, this will be put in the Bugle again asking for another volunteer. Grit for anyone requiring any, a supply is in the grit bin by the school, it was suggested as there is no Snow Warden for there to be a representative from various areas of the community, i.e. Shepherds Meadow, St Georges Lane, Marshalls Mead, Rye Park etc to co-ordinate when the weather is severe, with grit etc this will be put in the Bugle asking for volunteers.

6. County and District Councillors items. Cllr Saywell reported the budget is down to a deficit of £4.5 million, a draft budget is being drawn up, a 5% increase is to be considered for adults and children's social care, Cllr Saywell did say any spare money will be channelled into highway repairs.

A Devolution consultation will be circulated in the first half of the year. Highways, if there is something that needs urgent attention like blocked drains causing icy roads etc please ring in, see number above, a quicker response is more likely, then make a note of the reference number, "what three words" can be used to identify the location. Cllr Saywell was informed the flashing school sign has been removed this will be looked into.

Cllr Elliott reported on **Housing** in the TDC district, the housing crisis is mentioned a lot at the moment. There will be a letter/presentation which will be virtual, going out in the first to second quarter of the year. So, I have some figures etc for across Torridge District. As of December: TDC is currently sat at 21% of all housing under construction being affordable. Our target is 30%. All be it a 9% shortfall, it is moving in the right direction and an improvement on the past. Under construction across the district is: Affordable rent: 4, Social rent: 65, Shared ownership: 15 Intermediate housing: 3. In the pipeline to be constructed: Affordable rent: 2, Social rent: 231, Shared ownership: 63, Intermediate housing: 29, Discounted open market: 5. Plus a further 51 that have not yet been designated. The number of families in temporary accommodation currently sits at 50. This is down from 70, so again moving in the right direction. Empty dwellings is another item raised when the housing crisis is mentioned. For a dwelling/building to qualify for empty dwelling, it needs to be in a good/safe structural state with all doors, windows and roofs in good/safe condition and with all utilities still connected and been empty for 2 years or more.

Currently across TDC, there are 76 (78 on total 2023 figures) empty dwellings that the council are aware of. In regards to getting them back into service/homes, TDC take a diplomatic approach and talk to the current owner to come to a conclusion. The council doesn't have the funds to compulsive purchase properties. When comparing these figures to other local authorities across Devon, we sit in the bottom half. Torridge sits at number 9 with 78. If you are aware of a property that is meets the definition/criteria mentioned above for empty dwellings, then please report them to the council. For properties that are empty for only 6 months or more, these figures can be misleading as there can be legitimate reasons for these. But for 2022: Torridge had 757.

Planning enforcement: Parish councils and members of the public are our eyes and ears in regards to unpermitted development. **Do not hesitate to report any unpermitted development.** Councils are not legally obliged to enforce planning, however we are one of the highest performing councils when it comes to enforcement across the south west. We currently have 2 permanent enforcement officers and 1 temporary enforcement officer who finishes in March. This will be assessed to decide whether the position needs to be made permanent and the total brought up to 3 officers. There will be another planning presentation circulating in the spring. **River pollution:** Another topic mentioned a lot in the news at the moment is river pollution. We do have a presentation from a South West Water representative attending full council in January.

7. Tennis Court, progress is ongoing, the next project is for a new fence to be erected in the spring.

8. Finance, i Approve and sign the following cheques: - ,

583	Beaford Village Hall	£15.00
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ii. Set the precept, it was proposed by Cllr Underhill seconded by Cllr Steer to keep the precept unchanged at £6500, all in favour.

9.i. Planning

P C recommendations

TDC

	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	
1/0955/2023/FUL	No 13-panel ground mounted system, Sand School at grid ref 255452 115152 Bond Street Beaford	Passed
1/1049/2023/LBC 1/1048/2023/FUL	Erection of garage - Beaford Mill Road Beaford Winkleigh	Passed
1/1217/2023/FUL	Retrospective application for hardcore field track- land at grid reference 255192-15510, Beaford	No objections

i. Cllr Elliott was asked for an update on all the Enforcement cases that are currently live in the Parish

10. Police Report, Speedwatch has not been undertaken recently due to the bad weather, but will be taking place tomorrow Thursday, about 10% of drivers are caught speeding when the routine times are changed, the group are looking for volunteers.

11. Ways to improve the Village and Parish Environment.

12. Caretakers Report & Hall report, it was reported the hall are supporting the various organisations very well. The next project is to improve the car park, the hall committee would like the support of the Parish Council with this large project. It costs in the region of £12,000 to run the village Hall for a year. Cllr Berry is the Parish Councils representative on the hall committee so all Parish Council queries will go through him. It is to be asked what revenue the hall gets from the fed in tariff.

13. Correspondence

i. The DALC newsletters have been circulated.

Date of next meeting: **Wednesday 28th February Council Parish Meeting 2024**
in the Parish Hall 7.30pm

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

Forthcoming meeting: Wednesday 27th March 2024 Parish Council meeting.