

BEAFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the Wednesday 24th April 2024

Cllr G Underhill (took the chair)

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

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

In attendance Cllr A Saywell County Councillor Cllr R Lock District Councillor and seven members of the public.

Apologies Cllr R Huxtable Cllr B Millward Cllr T Elliott District Councillor

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 26th April 2023 were agreed and signed.

2. Chairman' Report. This is the report from Chairman Cllr Bruce Millward of the Beaford Parish Council activities from May 2023 to April 2024.

The Parish Council has been busy over the previous year, starting with a change in the Chairpersons occupancy from Councillor Gill Underhill to Councillor Bruce Millward. At this point the significant contribution of Councillor Underhill to the work of Beaford Parish Council should be acknowledged. She has left the Parish Council in a better state than when she became Chairperson. The focus of the Councils' work has continued to be planning, highways, the lived environment of the Parish and the social groups. Firstly, planning. A number of requests have been assessed by the Council with a majority receiving acceptance. There have been no new major building development proposals and there are none that are expected soon. One aspect that the Council has had to deal with has been regarding non-adherence to planning law. This takes many forms but at its worst it can involve potentially serious environmental consequences. The Council keeps watch over such issues and liaises with all relevant bodies to mitigate any problems. Other infringements are raised and processed so that the relevant authorities can deal with such non-compliance. This will result in one of three outcomes, a retrospective planning application being submitted for processing, an appeal against such an objection or the enforcement officers being called in and the individual concerned being required to enact remedial work.

Secondly, highways. The significant increase in both size of vehicles and quantity of passing traffic is of concern to the Council and it is constantly trying to establish effective and enforceable plans to both reduce speed and keep traffic moving. Further work is to be carried out over the next year to improve both of these elements. This includes signage but also will include liaison with the County Highways Department to enact effective solutions. A note must be made of the excellent speed watch team who have had a positive effect on vehicular movements through the village itself. There are continued and acute problems with parking in the village; this is a situation which will only worsen. This is resulting in Green Lane and Towell Lane often being full. Additionally, there is still some parking in the Village Green which is not permitted unless the individual has permissive rights of access; these are for Tricks Terrace and Green Cottage only.

Thirdly there is the lived environment. The Council continues to maintain the Village Green, its play equipment and the Queen Elizabeth II shelter and copper beech tree. It also ensures the timely cutting of the village green and the landing area on the Village Hall field. This year grit bins have been installed for the benefit of the entire village during icy and snowy winter weather. It is worth noting that the Council still require volunteers for a road warden to maintain the verges on the side roads of the village and there is a requirement for one or more snow wardens to ensure that the walkways are kept clear during

snowy weather incidents. If any wish to volunteer then please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council for information and to apply. The Council encourages any reporting of issues regarding pavements and green areas. The Council is looking at specific proposals in the future to improve both access and safety regarding the Parishes public areas. There are issues, regarding litter and dog fouling and these are a continued problem for the Council to monitor and resolve. The engagement of the village will be of great value in this task. Finally, there are the social groups. It has been gratifying to see the expansion of the Village Hall events and congratulations are due to the Chair and Committee of the Village Hall for their hard work and dedication. Likewise, the Short Mat Bowls club, the Tennis club and the Parent Hub have all made good progress and congratulations to them on their efforts as well. There has been sterling work done by volunteers for the Church, the ladies' group, keep fit and a number of other groups as well. The village should be proud of the engagement of so many people in its social life. The Autumn Show, the landmark event for the village, goes from strength to strength and its organisers and volunteers should be rightfully proud of the outstanding work that they do every year. The Council has been pleased to assist with financial contributions to many of these groups and it will continue to do so in the future. Footpaths should be kept open and clear of barriers; this is a requirement of landowners in the area. The Parish is blessed with a number of excellent public footpaths, which can be found online, and it is to the credit of the landowners that they exist at all. The quid pro quo of that is that walkers should treat the land they are on with care and empathy, remembering that land, especially farms, are private and are often the source of income for their owners. Please keep dogs on a lead and leave no trace of your passing by. Above all, do not disturb livestock. Finally, thank you to the Clerk and Councillors of Beaford Parish Council; to Andrew Saywell our County Councillor, the District Councillors, Councillors Locke and Elliott and to all who have contributed to the life of the village and Parish of Beaford.

3. Financial Report, Parish Council funds at present stand at £11,590.24

4. Village Hall report, Representing Beaford Village Hall Committee Dennis Buswell. Thank you for your invitation to bring you up to date regarding the activities taking place in our village hall. The new committee has bonded very well and has worked hard bringing all the necessary legal matters up to date, and I can confirm all what is required is in place Registration of Trustees, Banking matters, the appropriate licensing, Electrical certification, Safeguarding policy, Food Hygiene certification has been obtained etc Ellie has given this a lot of time and effort, so a lot of appreciation to her. I can confirm that we have made good progress with our maintenance list the first priority was to install hand rails to the steps for better access for less abled. The second task was to carry the repairs to the stone structures in Door Step Green. One of the others was to carry out some temporary improvements to the carpark which was in desperate need of attention in view of the many attendees to our events, church users and many visitors to Doorstep Green. This temporary fix it is still sub-standard and the cost to carry out work to bring it up to a minimum standard is beyond the village hall committee alone, if this is something the P C can assist with it would be very much appreciated and a great access to the village. I can confirm other than the required certification work all the maintenance and improvements has been carried out labour free of charge, as the work has been carried out by the committee and volunteers, the materials have all the been funded by our endless events, therefore not eating into our reserves, and that has been our policy Even though good progress has taken place there is still other urgent works to be carried out for example the hall floor which is in need of refurbishment to avoid future major work , it is showing signs of rapid deterioration. We also have a wish list and one item on it would be to have installed a new picture window looking toward Dartmoor so all hall users can enjoy those lovely views all the year round, we intend to have a fund-raising campaign for this. We have obtained two grants 50/50 one for obtaining two Defibrillators and we thank the Parish Council for paying for the installation of these, The second grant was for the upgrading of our community library by replacement of the old book shelves, and new shelves has been installed, and is being very well looked after by Sue a ex - librarian. To meet our commitment, we have been busy putting on our social events which overall has been well attended and enjoyed,

but I am aware you can easily over do this for the volunteers and for the attendees but to meet our overheads and continue with our maintenance program and wish list there is no option. Looking forward from today D-day 80 will be our biggest and most costly event we have planned a unique evening dance with 40s music performed by the trio group The Hummingbirds, we are confident to give the community a good family time. We have hosted the Warm Hub which has been running twice a week throughout winter and it will continue throughout the year on Tuesday alongside the post office free to attend an opportunity for the community of finding a safe, warm friendly environment in which to meet others to have a chat and a warm drink. I can report that the hiring of the hall is overall good, and the booking is in the very good hands with Jo, and we are very lucky to have such a commitment from all our members and Simon and volunteers who tirelessly hard work making it all happen, I am very grateful to them all.

5. Police report, there was no annual report only a report for the last 30 days, being one vehicle crime and nine calls where logs were created 4 RTC's, 4 highway disruptions and one drugs related.

6.County and District Councillors reports Cllr Saywell reported on

Financial Situation – Final figures are being finalised but it is likely that DCC came in with an underspend for the 2023-24 financial year. I cannot stress enough what an achievement this is given the wider challenges the Council has faced in the past 2 years, and this puts us on a firm footing for this new financial year. Compared with the neighbouring and wider local government family, Devon's finances appear to be in a far more secure position.

Devolution - I have outlined in previous reports the Devolution settlement for Devon. The consultation has now closed and DCC Full Council will vote to ratify the agreement on Monday. While this won't for most people change things overnight, it is the start of a journey for Devon and puts us in a much stronger position to engage with Central Government, draw down more funding for economic and affordable housing regeneration schemes, and over time see a greater transfer of powers away from Westminster and down to Devon.

There has been some fears expressed during the consultation that the new Devon and Torbay County Combined Authority will be too remote and focus funding on south Devon only at the expense of the north of the County and we will be 'overlooked'...

I do not agree with that assessment and would point out that, with the recent exception of Levelling Up Funding, both Torridge DC and Devon CC on their own have been regularly overlooked for the past 50 years! Carrying on with the status quo won't change that... but I believe the Devolution Settlement will re-set our relationship with Government and the poor economic and social indicators in Torridge will mean this area is a priority. And to give a tangible example, I happen to believe if we'd had this set up before it would not have taken over 30 years to demolish the old Creamery site at Taddipport and funding for a regeneration scheme could have been drawn down much sooner, and in a way that our existing local government organisations on their own simply haven't been able to do. I will provide more details once a final decision is taken next week.

John Hart - As you may have seen in the local news, Cllr John Hart, the Leader of Devon County Council will be retiring in May after 15 years as Leader. He is likely to become the new Chairman of the Council in the next municipal year. Although not officially confirmed yet, Cllr James McInnes, County Councillor for Hatherleigh and Chagford and the current Deputy, is likely to become the new Leader at the Council's Annual General Meeting in May. Andrea Davis, County Councillor for Combe Martin Rural and Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment is likely to be nominated as the new Deputy Leader.

SEND Settlement – Over the Easter period the Government have announced a new funding settlement for Special Educational Needs services in Devon, with £95 million being drawn down to help the County Council balance the SEND Budget and improve the service for our children and young people in Devon. This settlement was more generous than first expected, in part due to our

overall careful financial management, as referenced earlier in my report. This settlement also helps to contribute to the Council's long term financial stability.

£10 million more for Highways – Thanks in part to the more generous settlement from the Government on SEND, £10 million of savings the Council had made in the past financial year will now be re-allocated to Highways. The majority of this funding will be used to carry out more serviceability patching – which are resurfacing style repairs/patches – on defects rather than standard pothole repairs. A further allocation will be used to boost the drainage budget further too.

It is pot hole season so please keep reporting **The DCC website is devon.cc/report-it**

Cllr Rose Lock was thanked for all the help and support she gives to the Parish Council, likewise Cllr Saywell thank you.

7. Report from the Skittles club, the group meet every Thursday evening 7pm to 9pm at Beaford Village Hall with an average of 15 people attending. Own refreshments are provided, the members are self-sufficient and happy with the setup, more people are looking to join. The Parish Council was thanked for the grant to the club.

Report from Beaford PCC with Gary Owen the rector and our new Curate Ally Hope Beaford Church has been very busy this last year. The congregation has increased now to approximately 15 each week at the Sunday Services, support for the monthly Youth Club in the Village Hall and the continuing of bible classes on Monday mornings. There has been ongoing work to manage the large trees in the churchyard. The Bell Tower is regularly used now with a strong team of ringers lead by Martin Church. We do still await approval by the diocese to make a meeting space and tea and coffee making facility in the church. There is a strong team on the PCC Rob Pearce as Focal Minister, Ruth Castle and Joy Collins as Church Wardens, Sara Copson as Secretary, Ellie Pearce as Treasurer, Richard Heard and Kathleen Buckley as Synod Reps. Marlene Jury has taken on the role of organising flowers and keeping the church clean and tidy. Richard Heard and Steve Jenning continue to keep the Churchyard in excellent up keep. John Spilstead continues to fund raise for the upkeep of the churchyard with the 200 Plus Club. During the past year Diana Goodacre held a very successful Garden Tour in Beaford raising an amazing £500. We have received some very generous donations towards the repair of the organ, which is now in good working order. Report given by Ellie Pearce.

8. Report from the Tennis Club no report was received.

9. Report on the Short Mat Bowls Club April 2023 to April 2024. In early April 23 we hired two England trained short mat bowling coaches to try and improve our bowling squad's performance. The training session improved everyone's accuracy and so it proved to be a useful investment. We purchased embroidered polo shirts in April for the bowling squad, this was just in time for the start of the summer bowling season as we had joined the north Devon and north Cornwall Federation Afternoon League in April 23 to see if we could compete against the more experienced teams. During the summer season we played ten games against the other five teams in the league. Five at home and five away. At the end of the summer, we achieved a respectable third place out of six teams. In June we purchased a second hand medium fast mat to give the club a wider range of bowling surfaces. In September we entered two teams in a pair's tournament at Winkleigh. Both teams managed to win two games out of four, this was a very promising result for the club. In October we decided to join the local Merton short mat bowling league to minimise the travelling to away teams during the winter period. We ordered club fleeces for the bowling squad for the winter season which runs from 1st October to 31st March. During the winter season we played against eight other teams at home and away and again we finished in third place but this time in a league of nine teams. In March 24 we purchased a new bowling carpet at a cost of £1,333.00. This was kindly funded by a number of grantors. One of which was the Beaford Parish Council and the club is very grateful for this financial assistance. Towards the end of March and early April we enter two triple tournaments. One at Winkleigh and one at High Bickington. Our teams bowled very well in both these competitions and

raised the profile of Beaford within the bowling community. We rejoined the North Devon and North Cornwall Bowling Federation for the 2024 Summer Season and I will tell you how we performed at the next AGM. Report was given by John Spilstead.

Report from the Bell Tower Update 2024 Mr Martin Church reported on his Achievements: -He assumed the role of Bell Captain Feb '23. Since then, he has joined ringers from Monkleigh, Torrington, Little Torrington and Peters Marland; those ringers now attend Beaford on practice night. Practice night has moved from Wednesday to Thursday, the change was to accommodate other residents of Beaford. At least one bell is rung before every Sunday service. Full peals were rung prior to the Carols-by-candlelight and Christmas Day services. There are now three residents from Beaford who ring regularly – would be great to have more from Beaford. He has joined the Devon Association of Ringers, part of my membership includes the affiliation of St. George & All Saints Church Bell Tower into the Association. Safeguarding responsibilities are a requirement of the Diocese of Exeter, consequently he has gained certification at Basic Awareness and Foundation level of the relevant safeguarding modules. Following continual failure of the bell ropes during practice, all six ropes have been replaced with new ones.

Future Plans: - he intends to hold a 'social night' at the tower whereby other Towers within the D.A.R (and Torridge Guild of Ringers) are invited to ring at Beaford (attendees make a small donation towards the upkeep of the Tower). He's investigating the feasibility of holding a competition at the Tower during 2025 (again, donations are made by competitors towards the upkeep of the tower). A team will be at the tower for approximately an hour during the afternoon of the D-Day celebrations being organised by the Village Hall Committee; our plan is to ring a full peal, provide demonstrations and encourage visitors to 'have-a-go'. He's hoping to get a team together for the afternoon of the Autumn Show to replicate the D-Day presentation.

Wish List: - Lighting within the tower to be improved. Stowage of bell ropes to be improved. Bell rope heating tube to be modified. Muffles for the bells should be obtained. Access path & steps to the tower entrance to be repaired. Removable access ramp between the main church and the bell tower required for individuals who have restricted mobility. Access ladder to the upper level of the tower to be made secure (for this to have any effect, the triple extension ladder and set of steps need to be removed from the tower). Mains water to be available within the main church for replenishing water in the vases for the cut flowers, and for filling kettles for refreshments. Currently the floor is permanently wet under the tap so a small area is rotten; once the additional tap has been installed, the floor should be cleaned sanded and resealed. There is a section of lead flashing in the tower that fell during a storm, this needs to be refitted to maintain the integrity of the roofing

Report from the Parent Community Hub, the Beaford Parent Community Hub is about to celebrate its 2nd birthday and continues to be successful for parents and children that attend. Last Friday, we welcomed 25 children and am looking forward to our birthday party this Friday. The dynamics of the group changes over months, six months ago, we had a large number of small babies, so the group adapted to welcoming new mums, who were able to sit and chat over a coffee. Now we are seeing these small ones turn into toddlers, so soon we will be able to reintroduce weekly activities as well as play. The mums can continue chatting over their cuppa. We have been very fortunate to have the support of Rev Ally who attends regularly, and also once a month, Julia Halpin comes to offer baby weighing and to offer any advice required. We will like to stress that we welcome anyone from the community and beyond to join us we hope you will feel welcome. Thanking everyone for their support, here's to the next twelve months. The report was given by Jo Carey, Gemma Underhill and Anita Heard.

Report from The Beaford Autumn Show, this year September 7th 2024 will be the Autumn Show's 10th year and last as it stands as the Beaford Autumn show. We have a packed day- produce and craft show followed by live music, gun dog display, bouncy castles, great prizes in the raffle, coffee shop, bar and barbeque. The Prize Cups will be inscribed with the 2024 winners and a show

cupboard will be erected somewhere within the Village Hall for their storage. Each year we offer clubs, societies, and groups to apply for small grants from the money we make. We have helped the Caterpillar/toddler groups, Messy church, Beaford PTA, Short Mat Bowls, Brownies, Dog agility to name but a few. We have made contributions to the defibrillator, Church Bell restoration fund, Picnic Benches, Village Hall, a Christmas tree each year with lights, before covid we put on Seniors Lunches at the pub. Any moneys left over this year will be offered to any village groups or societies or clubs that apply when informed. The current members of the Autumn Show Committee have been asked if they want to take over the organisation of the show, but no one has come forward, therefore if any individuals or organisation wish to continue or set up a new format of show we'll feel sure the Beaford community will welcome and support them. Report was given by Ellie Pearce. A big thank you was extended to the committee over the last 10 years for all the hard they have put in to a most enjoyable event in the Beaford calendar.

Report from Beaford Speedwatch over the past 12 months speed checks have been carried out approximately twice a week. With an average of 120 vehicles passing through per session over 12,000 vehicles with an overall average of 8 speeding vehicles per session equalling 998 which is 8%. Thank you to Sam, Joy, Steve and John. From 2024 Sam Wheller will now be the Speedwatch Co-ordinator. Cllr Pearce was thanked for all his hard work and dedication during his time as part of the Speedwatch team. Report was given by Rob Pearce.

Thank you to all those who provided reports for the meeting.

As there was no further business the meeting was closed.

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