

BEAFORD PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the
Wednesday 27TH November 2024

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Present Cllr G Underhill, Cllr S Berry Cllr R Pearce Cllr R Huxtable_Cllr B Millward_Cllr C Steer_and Mrs A Snell clerk.

In attendance – one member of the public

Apologies Cllr Saywell County Councillor Cllr R Lock District Councillor Cllr Elliott 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

- 1.i. The Minutes of the meeting held on 30th October were agreed and signed.
- ii. The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November were agreed and signed.

2. Clerks Report,

i. The application to have the top of the Village Hall car park register as a Community Asset, has been successful. This started the investigation into the ownership of this part of the car park, following the notice posted by Beaford Arts as minuted in the 14th November meeting, since that meeting it has come to light that in 2019, the Village Hall committee obtained the field for £1 paid solicitors' cost of £15,000, and agreed to surrender the top half of the car park. This deed of surrender was drawn up but it seems as yet has not been determined, this is the email from the solicitor.

"The other interesting document is the Deed of Surrender, dated 07.02.2019. This purports to release the rights that were granted to the Village Hall in the deed dated 14.08.1997, so they no longer affect the Grantors (Beaford Arts) property. In the Deed of Surrender the Grantors property is defined as the land in title number DN327763 , i.e. the top section of the car park. This is particularly confusing and does suggest that in 2019, when the deed of release was completed, both Beaford Arts and the Village Hall Trust entered into the deed with the mutual understanding that the top section of the car park was owned by Beaford Arts. If you look at the Charges Register (C) in both titles you will note that entry 2 relates to the deed date 7.02.2019, the land registry have recorded in the entry that "the validity of the release has not been determined". This potentially links to the pending application and might be because, according to the Land Registry records, the title to the top section of the car park (DN327763) vests in the Village Hall Trust."

Minutes have asked to be seen for the Village Hall committee meetings at that time to ascertain the situation.

So, all is not clear, the advice from the solicitor is for Beaford Arts to contact Beaford Village Hall and discuss the situation but as yet no contact has been made. The conclusion is let Beaford Arts prove they own the area, the Village Hall Chairman is pursuing this, it was suggested if a meeting was convened Cllr Berry would attend as the Parish Council representative.

It was agreed by all to ask Tozers for an invoice to ascertain the cost to date.

- ii. The Councillor vacancy notice from TDC comes to an end on Monday 2nd December if 10 or more electors have not asked for an election, the position of Parish Councillor will be filled by co-option, a further notice will be put up asking for candidates and co-option take place at the next meeting on the 15th January.

4. Chairman's Report i. The Village Green, the play equipment is in good order, the Wicksteed inspection has been received this will be reviewed and assessed at the next meeting.

Mr Castle has sanded some of the benches, an invoice with 18.5 hours for the period 31st August to the 1st November has been submitted for maintenance work.

Cllr Pearce has changed the dog bin, the litter bin has arrived but needs the base to be secured to the ground ideally concrete, Richard Heard is to be asked to undertake this job. The rubbish bins are emptied on Fridays

ii. Defibrillators, no report.

The DCC website is devon.cc/report-it PLEASE REPORT or ring 0345 1004 115

5. Highway Issues. i. The public bridleway sign at the corner by the hall has been found in the field, part has broken off but it needs to be replaced. The footpath through from Mount Pleasant towards Beaford Mill Road the signs need to be sorted, Cllr Huxtable is to undertake this.

ii. SORN car on Village Green, a letter is to be sent to the owners asking them to remove it, as SORN cars are not allowed to be parked on private property.

6. County and District Councillors items. Cllr Saywell

Devolution/Budget – As reported to you at the last meeting the Government have confirmed the Devolution Deal will be implemented without any changes (for the time being) from the Deal that was agreed with the previous Government. Currently a lot of behind-the-scenes legal work is being carried out to prepare the statutory instrument which will be laid down before Parliament. Timescales are fluid but it will likely be later this autumn. Following the Chancellor's Budget, the indications we have from Central Government is that the increases DCC will have to pay for National Insurance Contributions as an employer will be funded so it should not be a budget pressure for the next financial year. However, the impact on Adult Social Care and other care providers is still being assessed. Within the Budget documents as well has been an indication from the Government that they might want to re-open the thorny issue of Local Government Reorganisation and have a single Unitary Authority instead of the current 'Two Tier' system of District and County Councils. I hope in Devon we do not go down this avenue as it is very unlikely there would be agreement over what size and shape a unitary authority would be and instead of capitalising on our Devolution Deal and working together, I suspect the local councils in Devon will get consumed by this ongoing debate instead. The set up we have had in Devon with 'Team Devon' has, I think, worked relatively well. Of course, if the Government orders reorganisation, then we will have to do it, but I don't think we are at that point yet so for the time being, 'business as usual' should remain the right approach. **Highways**

Winter Service – As you can imagine, there was fairly significant disruption to the highway network last week with snow and ice. Gritters were deployed from Dolton Beacon Depot in anticipation of the forecast, during the early hours and also throughout the day.. Where we see significant amounts of snowfall over a short period of time it is still possible for this to settle, despite best endeavours with the spreading of salt and we did see this in places prior to 'Storm Bert'. Please be assured the Network Operations Control Centre is working really hard currently to manage the network as effectively as possible, this includes the deployment of gritters for further treatments throughout the day and into the night. DCC has replaced and upgraded six of its 37 frontline gritters with newer models ahead of this winter. These replacement vehicles include touchscreen controls to enable drivers to adjust their plough attachments without leaving their cab. The gritters are deployed by the Council's Network Operations Control Centre. Based in Exeter, they use CCTV, weather information, traffic and congestion data to monitor Devon's Road network 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The Gritters are also GPS tracked so the Council knows when, where and which routes have been treated, and can also be alerted in case the drivers get into any difficulty. Around 24,000 tonnes of salt are stored in gritting depots across the county at the start of the season. There are also more than 3,500 grit bins located across Devon to support community self-help on roads which are not on the gritting network. At this time of year, local communities are encouraged to check grit bins in their



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If you are reporting an emergency that requires immediate attention, please call us on 0345 155 1004. An emergency on the highway is defined as something

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on your internet browser). **Finally, the Council will pre-wet it's salt with a brine solution as it is ejected from the gritters to help it work in to a solution more quickly and to keep the salt from bouncing off the road. Once in a solution it is less obvious to see where we've treated, especially if the roads are already wet at the point of treatment.** Unfortunately, this sometimes looks as though a road has not been treated but this isn't the case, they will have been! But if the road temperatures are below freezing and there is heavy snow, even repeated salting treatments will only go so far in keeping the road clear... **Household Support Fund** – DCC will receive a share of the Household Support Fund, as we have each year since 2021. This allocation, like previous ones, is a little over £5 million. The council are now agreeing how we will distribute the funding, working closely with Devon's eight District, City and Borough councils and voluntary and community partners. Citizens Advice Devon will be one of the recipients to receive Household Support Funding so that they can continue to support people who are struggling to meet their energy needs. Support comes in the shape of fuel voucher payments, and longer-term relief of fuel poverty through initiatives that help homes become more energy-efficient, and that help people stay warm at home – such as heated throws, body warmer or rechargeable hot water bottle, for example. This latest round of Household Support Fund also allows DCC to continue to provide Free School Meal holiday vouchers to families whose children are eligible for benefit-related free school meals during term time. **People Strategy** – I don't normally comment on my Cabinet remit with staffing as a lot of it is focused on behind the scenes work which isn't always of relevance to my Town and Parish Councils, however I thought I would highlight the fact that the Council has agreed and is implementing a new 'People's Strategy' which, put simply, is about making sure our Council workforce feels valued and also instils a greater performance culture within the organisation. We have already started to see some tangible improvements with a new recruitment and retention strategy for Children's Services which has been reducing the number of Agency workers employed by DCC, and across the organisation the overall absence rate has declined (down to 8.9 days per year from 9.6 days lost to absence, sickness, etc.). Compared with the private sector that rate is still high, but it is lower with comparable public sector organisations and the trend is going in the right direction. Ultimately, I am of the view that a happier and more efficient workforce ultimately means a better service from Council Officers and officials to the people of Devon. **Locality Budget** - I have been delighted to support many community projects with my local Councillor Locality Budget Grant from helping to set up Community Libraries, repairing community assets and supporting local schools with new learning resources. I do still have some funds available as we approach the end of this current financial year so if you do have a project on in your area please do get in touch as your organisation may be eligible for a grant. Cllr Lock reported on the Towell housing development the final draft of the S106 has still not been signed. Cllr Lock outlined what is a non-material planning application in relation to NO 1/0055/24 relates to permission NO 1/0407/2019– it is a way to make minor changes to an existing planning permission without needing to submit a new application and the process is that the local planning authority must be satisfied that the amendment is non material. The applicant has applied to have the wording changed from pre commencement to prior occupation, to allow work to start on the site.

7. Tennis Court, no update. Maintenance records and grass cutting records have been kept. 405

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

615	Beaford Village Hall	£15.00
616	N Castle	£277.50
617	M Baker grass cutting	£1600
618	Wicksteed	£180.00
619	South West Fixings	£30.36
620	Mr R Pearce	£19.04

i. Grass cutting contract, it was proposed by Cllr Huxtable seconded by Cllr Steer to accept Mr Bakers quote of £1685 for the 2025 grass cutting season, all in favour.

ii. The budget will be set at the 15th January meeting.

9.i. Planning

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1/0279/20 20/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	
1/0055/24	This non material application no 1/0055/24 relates to permission no 1/10470/2019 and in particular to the wording of condition no 16 which relates to landscaping. Condition 16 reads as it stands before the development is commenced a landscape management plan including long term design objectives, managerial responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscaping areas other than small private owned domestic gardens, for that phase shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved in accordance with the approved details. Reason to ensure the objectives of the landscaping are achieved and the proposal assimilates well in the surrounding area.	

i. Concerns were raised at the Marshalls Mead application, regarding the site entrance that is to be used when work commences, it was anticipated the site entrance would be onto the A3124 after demolishing the bungalow, concerns were raised if any other entrance is used as that will greatly increase traffic numbers along Green Lane, this being a problem area already. This is to be looked into.

10. Police Report, During the month of September there have been no crimes: During the same period there have been 2 calls including a road collision. Speedwatch took place last week 10% were over the speed limit.

11. Caretakers Report & Hall report, the hall committee were thanked for the excellent sensors that now activate and switch on the lights when approaching the hall. Thank you, Mr Buswell and team. It was also suggested to have a clean-up day next year.

12. Correspondence

i. The DALC newsletters have been circulated.

Date of next meeting: **Wednesday 15th January 2025** in the Parish Hall 7.30pm

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

Forthcoming meeting: Wednesday 26th February 2025 Parish Council meeting.