

EAST BUDLEIGH with BICTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of East Budleigh with Bicton held on Tuesday, 30 April 2019 in the Village Hall, East Budleigh

PRESENT	Cllrs	Valerie Lister (Chair)	P Barnard
		C Taunton	Mrs P Hayman
		M Smith	K Quant
		J Carter	D Wensley

There were 12 members of the public present. District Cllrs Wright and Jung were also present as was Cty Cllr Christine Channon.

Dr Sam Bridgewater from Clinton Devon Estates regarding the conservation work carried out continuously by the Estate:

The Estate covers 10,000 ha and is a land-based business with a broad portfolio of activities including agriculture, forestry, conservation, renewable energy, housing, business parks and equestrian events; 10% of the Estate area comprises the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, one of Europe's most important conservation sites, the majority of which is managed for wildlife and access by the Estate's own conservation charity; in total 14% of the Estate area has statutory or non-statutory conservation designations and is managed to support wildlife; a further 17% of the Estate area is woodland which is significantly greater than the national and Devon average. This is managed for timber production, wildlife and access. The majority of the woodlands have permissive access. Challenges in the forestry sector include climate change, tree diseases (e.g. ash dieback) and grey squirrels; the Estate has recently completed an audit of all the habitats of conservation significance across its holdings and published its priorities for action. This publication is in the public domain and is one of the first of its kind in the country for a land-owning organisation; the Estate partners with a range of conservation organisations including the RSPB and Devon Wildlife Trust on a number of conservation projects including the protection of rare farmland birds such as curlew buntings and the conservation of bats (Greater Horseshoe Bat Project) and freshwater pearl mussels; the Estate supports national wildlife monitoring programmes, including of dormice; the organisation is currently one of 40 nationally selected to trial better ways of planning wildlife into the landscapes as part of Defra's plans to develop new land management schemes to deliver the aspirations of the government's 25 year environment plan; the organisation is one of the first nationally to embrace and incorporate natural capital thinking into our business model. This ensures that the extent and quality of habitats are understood and tracked, the services these habitats provide to society are given due regard, the risks to their existence are highlighted, and their value quantified as far as it is possible to do so. This approach informs decision making; the Estate is working with the Environment Agency to deliver an ambitious scheme to naturalise the lower Otter Valley and create new wetland reserve

of national significance (Lower Otter Restoration Project). This is one of the biggest conservation initiatives in the south west; along with the Devon Wildlife Trust the Estate was amongst the first organisations in England to support free-living beaver trials, one of the most exciting wildlife initiatives to appear in the British Isles recent decades; unlike most organisations the Estate thinks inter-generationally rather than in short funding cycles; business performance is judged on environmental Key Performance Indicators such as soil health, pollinator support and farmland bird populations as well as financial and social indicators; the Estate constantly invests in improving its knowledge of how its activity impacts on the environment, most recently demonstrated through part funding of a PhD at Exeter University investigating agricultural impacts on soil health, water quality and pollinators; the Estate accepts that not all of its land management decisions will please everyone all the time and regrets this, but endeavours to get the balance right in supporting the many conflicting needs of society whether it is energy, housing, employment, access and recreation, timber, food production or wildlife. Wildlife does come high up this agenda; when the Estate embarks on development projects, including housing, these respond to needs identified by local and neighbourhood plans. In such cases independent environmental advice always informs the plans and the approach follows gold standard practice as highlighted by the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We welcome external scrutiny and testing of these through the planning system. This always includes oversight by Natural England; environmental education is an important aspect of the Estate's activities with a full-time employee dedicated to supporting primary, secondary and life-long learning.

District Cllr Christine Channon expressed concern over local deforestation and asked if it was considered necessary and was it causing an increase in flooding. Progress was also given regarding the Otter Valley project.

1. CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW 2018/2019: EBBPC Chair's Report

Councillor Valerie Lister chaired the ten Parish Council meetings during the 2018/19 and delivered her Chair's Report:

Cllr David Buss resigned as Acting Chair and also from the parish council together with Cllrs Stan Roberts and Kevin Quant. On behalf of council and the parish, I thank these councillors for their invaluable contribution to council business. Two new councillors were co-opted on to the council; James Carter and Derek Wensley in May/June 2018. We have one new elected councillor namely Cllr Mike Walters who will join the parish council officially at the May 2019 Annual General Meeting.

In March 2018 it was agreed with residents to action a year's trial of Recreation Field monitoring regarding the problem of dog/fox faeces on the field which caused problems for the Football Club's matches. This has proved very successful and has improved relations between residents, the Football Club and the parish council. It is hoped that this monitoring can continue for the benefit of all concerned. Football club and Tennis club leases have been reviewed, renewed and signed.

Two separate events took place in the year; the WW1 centenary celebrations and the 400 year centenary of the death of Sir Walter Raleigh (his date of birth is unknown). Both events were very successful and much enjoyed by residents and visitors. The scarecrow festival took place in June with residents providing many original scarecrows – this event always attracts visitors and is very well attended as many other smaller events are incorporated into the weekend.

A representative of Devon Air Ambulance visited a parish council meeting and explained the need for more local night-time landing sites. Budleigh Salterton have already provided one site and it was suggested that following discussions with the parish council and the Football Club the Recreation Ground might provide a further suitable site.

It was agreed that all councillors should take advantage of the training courses provided by DALC. These have proved very useful and instructive and enables councillors to carry out and understand their duties and responsibilities with new insight.

The BT ‘phone box which is the property of the village was repaired and repainted by BT following several months of negotiation.

The Head Teacher of Drake’s School has taken early retirement and a temporary Head Teacher has been appointed and is proving very successful.

Following several months of discussions with a parish clerk from an adjoining parish a defibrillator has been bought and fitted to the outside Village Hall wall.

Training took place in November and was well attended by residents and councillors.

The council has undertaken procedures required for the implementation of GDPR. Files have been reviewed and where necessary sent away for official shredding.

Discussions have taken place and been agreed regarding new signage for the Recreation Field. The signs will be in place within a few weeks.

Cllr Wensley has reviewed and revised many parish documents including Risk Assessment, Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Policies & Procedures. A great deal of work was involved and Cllr Wensley was thanked for his diligence in this respect.

The extension of a late night bus service is to be investigated by Stan Roberts.

Residents have been asked for suggestions for the spending of CIL funding which will be available to the village over the next couple of years.

29 planning applications were discussed during the year.

As Chair, I would like to thank all councillors for their support during the past year and look forward to continuing and building on our improved relationship with residents.

2. **MINUTES:** The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday, 24 April, 2018 were received and confirmed as a correct record.

3. **QUESTIONS/DISCUSSIONS** by Public and Press: There was none.

SignedChair Date