

BREAGE PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE PARISH ROOMS BREAGE **ON TUESDAY 13 MAY 2024 AT 6.30 P.M.**

Present: Cllr A E Woodhams (Chairman)
Cllr C M Ralph
Cllr D Thomas
Cllr H Bradford
Cllr C Tyler
Cllr L Tyler

Cornwall Cllr J Hodgetts
D Rutherford BPC Clerk/RFO
Carol Macleod Outgoing Clerk
67 Members of the Public

**THIS WAS AN OPEN MEETING AND COULD BE ATTENDED BY ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC
COULD SPEAK IF THEY WISHED TO DO SO. ANY VOTE TAKEN ON ANY MATTER RAISED, COULD ONLY BE
VOTED ON BY THOSE ON THE ELECTORAL REGISTER FOR BREAGE PARISH**

The Chairman welcomed everyone.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from MS, GS and on behalf of 7 members of the Public.

2. CONFIRMATION OF THE NOTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 7 MAY 2024

Proposed, seconded and resolved confirmed

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2024/2025

The Chairman outlined copies of the Annual report and Finance Report would be available post the APCM which followed this meeting, as he needed Council approval at that meeting to release them.

Cllr Woodhams read out his report in full:

This year has once again been a very busy and interesting year for Breage Parish Council. By now you will all know who your Ward member is at Cornwall Council Mr Jay Hodgetts and at the end of the evening you will know the composition of Breage Parish Council and its committees.

Mrs Carol Macleod, Breage Parish Council Clerk and Responsible financial Officer is to retire from her post after 18 years' service. The Councillors and all the Parishioners who have had occasion to seek her guidance will miss her wise counsel. We wish her well in her retirement.

She is to be replaced by Mr David Rutherford a local resident from Germoe. Mr Rutherford has had an extensive turnover period which includes an ongoing commitment to obtaining a CILCA qualification in local council administration. Apart from providing the Council with a fully qualified Clerk it allows Breage Parish Council to submit an application to be recognised as a council of General Competence under the 2011 Localism Act. It is also a requirement that a significant number of Councillors have submitted themselves for election.

Success in this application allows the council to exercise a greater variety of functions within its power.

Breage Parish Council has welcomed Chris Tyler, Lynne Tyler, Gordon Smith and Catherina Oxford-Pope as councillors during 2024 with one resignation Cllr Nikki Roberts. Cllr C Oxford - Pope has since tendered her resignation post the notification of returning members without election to this Council.

Cllr Matt Southam, Cllr Rosie Rogers, Cllr Tony Best did not seek re-election at the recent election in order to allow new parishioners to be elected should they wish to contribute to their community by serving, unfortunately people did not come forward. We are fortunate that they have all submitted to be co-opted back to the Council for a further four years. Their

knowledge and contribution to the administration of the Parish is very much appreciated. Mrs Sarah Orpin continues to keep the parish rooms spick and span.

With careful budgeting and financial control, we have managed to keep the precept at a zero percent increase whilst discharging all of our statutory functions, building and maintaining our reserve and completing the capital projects outlined in last year's report. The Breage Parish accounts have just, in April, been certified by the auditor.

Additional land has been purchased in order to continue to discharge our functions as a burial authority. This area has been enclosed by a Cornish hedge and roll top fencing with appropriate gates and will be cultivated during the Spring.

The play and exercise areas at Breage, Ashton and Praa Sands continue to be well used and enjoyed by parishioners and visitors alike.

The addition of the recently constructed shelter at Breage should allow the field committee to extend its range of activities.

The hardworking and dedicated committees that run our parish community centres, hubs and village halls continue to provide an excellent range of activities for our parish and the Council is grateful for their dedication and efforts.

The Public Right of Way network throughout the parish has been well maintained over the year with due regard for the wildlife and the flora.

All the gullies, culverts and ditches have been maintained on B, C, and unclassified roads under the Lengthsman scheme which is administered by the parish council.

This year should see the introduction of the "20 is Plenty" scheme throughout the parish. The scheme hopes that by a reduction in speed to 20 mph in selected areas there will be a corresponding reduction in road traffic accidents and greater environmental gains. Breage parish council is still lobbying Cornwall Council to include Pengersick Lane in the scheme.

Planning issues occupy a large part of the agenda at Council meetings and is anticipated to be even busier with the introduction of new housing targets by the incumbent administration and the Planning and Infrastructure bill going through Parliament. The affordable housing target appears to be unachievable for the parish as it is a moving target, always increasing.

Breage Parish Council hopes that Cornwall Council, as the owners and operators of the public conveniences at Praa Sands, will be successful in its endeavours to provide a fit for purpose facility for the benefit of both Breage's council taxpayers and our visitors. Breage Parish Council have lobbied both the Member of Parliament and the CEO of Cornwall Council to ensure that toilet provision becomes a statutory provision for the primary council with appropriate financial provision.

Cornwall Council declared the steps that provide beach access from Praa Green a category 1 failure and that necessitated their removal. Breage Parish Council were successful in negotiations to establish a modest replacement flight of steps to the East of the original. The replacement steps ensure that beach users can exit the beach safely at all states of the tide and removes the significant coastal erosion created by the original steps.

After lengthy and complicated discussion between Cornwall Council and Breage Parish Council, a way forward has been established that will allow a community group the opportunity to rebuild the steps currently under the ownership of Cornwall Council at the centre part of the beach. A finite timeline of four months has been established by Cornwall Council to allow a certified build plan, supporting documents and financial assurances to be put in place and approved by Cornwall Council prior to sign off permission to build. Breage Parish Council wishes the community group well in their endeavour. With the permission to build in place and the time extension delaying the step removal, the way is clear for the Friends of Praa Sands group to proceed with their plans.

The current BPC management and policy documents will ensure that the village green remains a viable community asset for the foreseeable future. Recent repair and refurbishment of FP 54, SW Coastal footpath, has been completed on the steps with further upgrades to commence during the year.

Lower Trevurvas pond continues to thrive as a wildlife haven thanks to the volunteers' efforts to ensure its sustainability. A report is available separately.

I would like to place on record the efforts of those parishioners who make such a positive contribution to making our Parish a better place in which to live and work. Their commitment largely goes unnoticed and I am delighted to be able use this forum to say thank you to them.

Breage Parish Council meets for its ordinary council meetings on the first Tuesday of the month and its Planning and Land Use meeting is on the last Wednesday of each month: both meetings start at 1900 unless notification is given of an alternative time.

We welcome members of the public to attend these meetings.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2024/2025

The Chairman explained that The Clerk is the Responsible Finance Officer. Cllrs Rogers (Chairman), Bradford, Smith and Thomas were the Members of the Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee 2024/25. Cllr Woodhams as Chairman of Breage Parish Council is an ex-officio Member. Payments and other accounts matters were checked by a Member of the F&GP Committee before being presented to the Council each month. Bank Reconciliations were also checked. The Council's Internal Auditor was Mrs Barbara Goraus. The External Audit will be carried out by BDO LLP.

After the accounts had been examined by an Accounts Team Councillor, Cllr Gordon Smith, they were passed to the Internal Auditor, Mrs Barbara Goraus. The Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 was completed on 30 April 2025 and signed by Mrs

Goraus who is very much thanked for auditing the accounts, the Breage Field Committee's Accounts and Ashton Hub Accounts this year. Those accounts would be made available in the Annual report to be released post the APCM which followed.

Attendees were asked if there were any questions

Parishioner - I think that the parish Council should have pre-planned the precept when the toilets were closed, so that there was enough money in the budget to keep them open.

5. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS 18:45

This is designed to get the main points across of the meeting rather than be viewed as a transcript of every word or speaker.

Toilets

A Parishioner, said they would like BPC to vote to support the Friends of Praa Sands and offer financial support to the group, if it is viable for them (FOPS) to take on the toilets. The number of people who have turned up tonight indicates the strength of feeling on this matter.

Chair – Without pre-empting Councillors ahead of the next meeting, it is fair to say that we support the toilets entirely that has always been BPC's position. **I can confirm it will be an agenda item**, if ratified at the next BPC meeting (03 June) will happily provide a letter of support for FOPS taking on the toilets.

A Parishioner - Apparently Cornwall Council have offered you the toilets and you have said – No.

Chair - That is correct. It was offered under the devolution deal, we said no, because Cornwall Council (CC) defaulted in their agreement to this Council and the parishioners when previously running the toilets. We said we would run them if CC:

- 1) Replaced the 27,000-litre tank with a proper drainage field,
- 2) Developed a CIC to support maintaining the toilets
- 3) Made them fit for purpose. None of those things were done.

Under the devolution package Cornwall Council could pass the Toilets over to a community group. It's disingenuous to think we should take on something that Cornwall Council has declared not fit for purpose and too expensive for them to run.

A Parishioner – The issue has been kicked around between CC & BPC for years. Are you going to support the FOPS or not?

Chair – I refer to previous answer, which stated we will discuss at the next meeting.

A Parishioner – How much does it cost to run the toilets?

Chair – If they were viable then CC would be running them, as the reputational damage is enormous.

A Parishioner – Why are you not speaking to (Parishioner name redacted) who has a proposal for the toilets

Chair – If you wish to support that then the conduit is via your CC ward member and CC, it is their facility, they own it and it can be passed to a community group by CC.

Bridleways

A Parishioner – Raised concerns that the issue of riding & bridleways was not properly represented on the Council, in particular regarding rights of way, modification orders and blocked or disputed routes.

A proposal was raised that the Parish Council ensure that the Equestrian and bridleway using community is adequately represented by inviting the BPC rights of way councillor to attend bridleway related meetings when rights of way, modification orders and blocked or disputed routes, are being discussed.

It was voted via raised voice to support this by all

The Chair – We would be delighted for a CLLR to attend your meeting and equally be delighted if any of your members wished to attend any Parish Meeting to update BPC on developments. We will also do a review of our website to look at

Bridleway information and update where necessary to ensure the correct information is provided.

Trescowe

A Parishioner – Requested that BPC install a defibrillator in the disused Telephone box, as the nearest one was over 2 miles away.

Chair – Happy to install power via reconnecting the Box to the mains. In all other cases within the Parish, the community had liaised with Ronnie Richards Charity in Penzance to install a defibrillator. We can help with a grant if you write in to the Clerk.

Play Provision.

A Parishioner – raised the issue of play provision for Children in Praa Sands.

Chair - we will add this subject as an agenda item at our next meeting

Toilets

A Parishioner – Can we have a vote on whether BPC should take on the Toilets at Praa Sands.

A vote was held via raise of voices - **It was unanimously supported.**

Chair – This meeting has no power to commit BPC to spend money, so the vote is devoid of practical application. I will however put it **on the agenda for the next Parish meeting** for Cllrs to discuss taking on the toilets. And will communicate the results of that via letter within 5 days of that meeting to the proposer.

Steps at Praa Sand

A Parishioner - the parishioners are aware of all the issues and reasons around regarding the failure to reinstate the steps. I think you can see from the turnout. We're very unhappy. Sadly, as you heard earlier, we are now in the position of having to try and sort it out ourselves. That does very much diminish, the council in our eyes

We now have a four-month window (that is the proposal) from John Mitchell, Cornwall Council environment manager for the Friends of Praa Sands group to set up a community interest group (they have proposed a charitable Incorporated organisation, that will be better suited). This group as per requirements will design, construct and maintain a set of ladder steps to access the beach and also accept maintenance responsibility and include public liability for the pre-existing upper fighter steps and indemnify BPC of any liability. Onerous though it may seem the Friends of Praa Sands and this group feel they have the help from resources to do this. But they ultimately need the permission and authority and the Parish Council of landowners to progress.

We therefore ask the council to vote on Cornwall council's proposal and your future permission. So, we can clearly see that you are fully supporting this and show some sort of commitment for the intended outcome namely the return of some fully functioning middle step, so clearly desired by all our residents.

Chair -BPC appointed two Cllrs who live on Praa Green and joined BPC to work on a solution to maintaining the middle steps. They have had numerous meetings with Cornwall Council, FOPS, MS4S to support this cause. BPC owns Praa Green on behalf of residents following a court case and registered it as Green for the benefit of all residents. The steps were put in in 2009 by Kerrier District Council, in 2009 it went over to the unitary council, so the successor council, Cornwall Council, took responsibility for the steps. Annually they inspect the steps, they inspect the steps annually, when they inspected them last year their engineers, lawyers and environmental agency staff came with them and declared them a category One failure, that being the case they could not be insured. They would not take the liability for the public using them, which is quite correct. We have similar criteria for playground inspections etc. We were advised by CC that they were not safe to use and they should be removed. We said our preferred option was for those steps to be repaired and replaced. For all the reasons detailed in the Category one failure report, they said they could not do that, so they were going to take them away.

A Parishioner – so you just accepted that?

Chair – No we didn't we made an enormous representation to get them to replace the steps. What I can say is BPC supports the FOPS in their endeavours and welcomes the 4-month extension to the steps removal, which we spent months

negotiating and agreed with Phil Mason on 29 April 2025, as CC retain the liability for the steps, in order to give FOPS the time to produce a workable and approved solution.

A Parishioner – Asked why this was such an issue given the state of the steps at the Hendra end, which were far worse.

The Chair – The steps at Hendra fall under a different category, that end is owned by commoners, they have responsibility for those steps and access down to Mean High Water Springs, as such they do not fall under the remit of CC

Another Parishioner – We have positive news in that we have a ballpark figure for insurance that would cover the Steps and toilets. The Friends group will be a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Charity).

Do we have your support for the John Mitchell, Cornwall Council proposal. Because we can work quickly on the steps and toilets if we do?

Chair – We have not seen the proposal, as I believe it was only released today (13 May). We support the FOPS, you have an absolute guarantee that if you can meet the conditions laid down by CC you have our full support. What we will need as a public body, is to see documents formally constituting the FOPS as a legal entity. Design plans as agreed with CC, a management plan for the steps maintenance and proof of insurance for the proposed steps within that time frame and an exit plan if the FOPS falls away. It is understandable if actual work does not begin until the spring but we will need to see a plan within the 4-month timeframe.

If the above is not able to be demonstrated then BPC will expect to hear from CC on how they plan to remove their liability from our land and return back to a dune system.

Once you have established a legal identity, a CIO was mentioned, BPC would be in a position to legally provide £4000 of funding to support the FOPS. It looks like you have the support of the community so please go ahead and do it. **This proposed framework will be discussed at the next BPC parish meeting for Council approval.**

Newly Elected Cornwall Councillor

The Chair thanked the outgoing Cornwall Councillor John Keeling MBE for all his service to the Parish and welcomed the new Ward Member for Porthleven, Breage and Germoe, Cllr Jay Hodgetts.

Cllr Jay Hodgetts introduced himself and outlined his background and expressed his desire to work with the community.

Meeting closed 19:59