

# BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 8th February 2017 at 7:30pm**

**Present:** Councillors: Pam Barrett (Chair), Janet Jones, Simon Rines, Neil Smith, Ron Fox, Mark Maish, Linus McCloskey, Greg Porter, Dan Simpson and Andy Stokes

**Press:** No press in attendance.

**In attendance:** Councillor Stuart Barker (District & County) and 1 member of the public.

## **Part I (Open to the Public)**

### **17/165. Apologies:**

Councillors: Pamela Forbes and Fanny Jackson.

Town Clerk: Judith Hart

**17/166. Councillors invited to declare any interests:** None

**17/167. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017:**

Signed and approved by Cllr. Pam Barrett.

### **17/168. Questions raised by the Public:**

Member of the public asked about details of the Devon County Council (DCC) election scheduled for May 2017 and what restrictions, if any, there were on campaigning. He was informed that more information would be available from 23<sup>rd</sup> March and rules are detailed on the Teignbridge District Council (TDC) website or from the Democracy team at TDC.

### **17/169. Police report:**

No report available (due to absence of Town Clerk)

### **17/170. Reports from County Councillor and District Councillors:**

Cllr. Barker reported the following:-

Plymouth Road Parking – DCC Highways had been looking at extending the double yellow lines, but there is no option of widening the pavement or the provision of residents parking permits. Any proposed changes will be put forward in the next 3 to 4 weeks.

Cllr. Neil Smith suggested placing physical obstructions such as bollards to stop people parking illegally further down Plymouth Road as it causes danger.

**Actions:** Cllr. Pam Barrett to reinvigorate the parking working party and ensure we have a bigger picture. Cllr. Janet Jones will follow up with local residents to find agreed solutions

Cllr. Barker has agreed to fund new fencing at the Orchard Millennium Green.

The Chair asked Cllr Barker if Dartmoor National Park (DNP) planning officers could be more engaged with the Town Council.

Cllr. Barker agreed to try and ‘push start’ communication with DNP planning but they are waiting to see who will become the new Head of Planning now that Stephen Belli has left and Dan Janota, the Forward Planning Manager is on compassionate leave.

Cllr. Pam Barrett asked about planning approval for the development of Salmon’s Leap.

Cllr Barker supports the application, has recommended that a full planning application is submitted and that a request be made that it be seen by all Members, where arguments would carry more weight.

Cllr Barker has met with the logging contractors who drive large HGVs through the centre of the town and has informed them not to use this route. The yellow lines in Jordan Street will be extended to ensure adequate emergency access.

Cllr Barker reported that the DCC Adult Social Care Budget is set to increase by £19 million. He assured the Council that Ashburton & Buckfastleigh Hospital would remain in Public ownership and if necessary DCC Care will partner with the proposed health and wellbeing centre, including the Medical Centre, to ensure viability.

Cllr Barker reported that TDC are not planning any increase in the Council Tax precept this year and that the increase in funding for DCC adult and social care will correspond to a £300,000 reduction in funding to the District Council with the addition that TDC’s Rates and Support Grant will be reduced to zero by 2020.

Amendment to above paragraph noted at the Town Council Meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 from Cllr Stuart Barker:-

*“.....after 5 years of zero increases TDC has again decided to increase its share of Council Tax by £5 per year..... as a result of a change to the New Homes Bonus which was being reduced by £300k to fund additional money being allocated to adult social care by government.”*

**17/171. To receive the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017:**

Noted.

To resolve the following recommendation from Minute No: 17/78. To consider and recommend revision of the Financial Regulations and delegation of powers following the approval of a new budget for 2017/18.

Proposed by Cllr. Neil Smith and seconded by Cllr. Janet Jones – Unanimously carried.

To resolve the following recommendation from Minute No: 17/79. To consider and recommend that the full £3,000 budget allocated will be used for events for young people and that the additional £1,000 to pay for a fund-raiser to bring in more funding for youth activities is taken from the Community Development Fund allocation for 2017/18.

Proposed by Cllr. Neil Smith and seconded by Cllr Greg Porter - Unanimously carried.

**Action:** Cllrs Mark Maish and Pam Barrett to pursue and negotiate with a possible fund-raiser.

**17/172. To receive the minutes of the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee held on 1st February 2017:**

Noted.

**17/173. To receive the minutes of the Tourism, Recreation and Economic Development Committee held on 17th January 2017:**

Noted.

**17/174. Town Council Projects update:**

- Town Ranger – The Clerk is drawing up a job description for this new position and will be organising advertising.
- Youth Activities program - see minute no: 17/172.
- Helipad – a meeting has been arranged for Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February with a representative of the Football Club. Buckfast Abbey has promised to donate £2,000 towards costs and quotes have been received for the work needed to upgrade the floodlighting.
- Community Solar Panel installation – **Action:** Cllr. Andy Stokes to consult with the Devon Association of Renewable Energy (DARE) regarding the next steps of this process.

**17/175. Discuss the proposed Government funding cuts to schools:**

Cllr. Neil Smith: Cllrs Pam Barrett, Mark Maish and he met with Richard Arundel, Head of Buckfastleigh Primary School and Rachael Shaw, Head of Ashburton Primary School to determine the likely impact of the proposed funding cuts. Buckfastleigh Primary School will lose at least 10% of its budget as a result of the new government funding formula and DCC funding reduction. This could effectively be as much as £600 to £700 per pupil, with possibly three teacher's jobs at risk (or the loss of the remaining special needs, teaching assistants and auxiliary staff). This has been proposed despite the fact that Devon is historically underfunded.

Cllr. Pam Barrett: Buckfastleigh already has the highest level of child poverty in Teignbridge so this is going to hit hard and will also impact local residents who will lose jobs. There is a professional consultation being undertaken. Buckfastleigh Primary School is perhaps the worst hit school in South Devon – the formula is wrong.

Cllr Stuart Barker responded: Devon has been underfunded by over £2 million per annum. He is meeting with Richard Arundel on 9<sup>th</sup> February and will try to find out why we are disproportionately hit and will check with Rachael Shaw from the Academy.

Cllr Pam Barrett also pointed out to Cllr. Barker that recent DCC cuts to the bus service subsidy and the subsequent reduction in service, means that people are struggling to get to work, school and college. The trend towards TDC disproportionately funding resources in centres like Newton Abbot relied on transport links that enabled residents to access them. She pointed out she had been unable to obtain the comparative per head breakdown of spending locally from TDC.

Cllr Barker promised to obtain these figures.

Cllr Pam Barrett asked Cllr. Barker for copies of the risk assessments from TDC that must have been drawn up before cuts and changes in distribution had been determined.

Cllr Barker: School managers were present in the committee meeting that determined the dissemination of school funding from DCC and he will try to find out how these decisions were made and ensure that the minutes of Devon Schools Grant committee are made available. Our local MPs should question the imbalance in central funding for education in Parliament.

**Action:** Cllr. Pam Barrett proposed that the Council should send a letter insisting on the support of Mel Stride over this issue.

Cllr. Andy Stokes suggested that this be made public to ensure he responds and that this issue is brought to the attention of the public eye.

Members agreed that they would engage in a campaign to publicise proposed cuts to schools when information was clear.

**17/176. Chair's Announcements.** None

**17/177. Clerk's Announcements.** None.

**17/178. Correspondence.** None.

**17/179. Reports from other meetings and working parties attended by Members.**

Cllr. Andy Stokes: Attended the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) governing body meeting that decided to close the community hospitals. He pointed out that the CCG had not responded to the overwhelmingly opposed consultation. The written response from Totnes Labour party had been referred to in the summary report, but neither the responses of Buckfastleigh or Ashburton Town Councils had been acknowledged, which may have resulted in the governing body not being aware of them.

**Action:** Cllr Andy Stokes will draft a letter to both Healthwatch and the CCG to ask why both Town Councils had been excluded.

Cllr Simon Rines: Cllrs Mark Maish, Janet Jones, the Town Clerk and he had met with the TDC Estates Manager for Economy and Assets, Stephen Forsey regarding the recent TDC land disposal that had been offered to Teign Housing without consultation with the Town Council. Two parcels of land will be used for very small additions to Teign Housings' social housing stock. TDC and the Town Council to look at the possibility of transferring several small plots of land to Town Council ownership.

Cllr Pam Barrett pointed out that the Council had only discovered the plans by accident and asked Cllr Barker that the Town Council would like to be informed and involved in the future if TDC are contemplating changes to land within the parish

Cllr Greg Porter proposed a Councillor's surgery at Cafe Michelle in the next few weeks and various councillors offered to join him.

Cllr Dan Simpson: Attended the Lamb Pie Day committee AGM. A decision was taken to create separate committees for Lamb Pie day and the Christmas Fair as the workload for each event is proving too great for one group.

Cllr. Janet Jones: Attended the Teignbridge Association of Local Councils (TALC) meeting.

Cllr. Mark Maish: Met with Buckfastleigh Primary School regarding fund-raising including organising the upcoming fund-raising event for improvements to the school playground. He also met with the Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Rotary Club to enlist their support which was forthcoming.

**17/180. Urgent Items:**

Cllr. Neil Smith: No response from the Devonian business owner has been received to any communications or requests for a meeting with the Town Council. He has investigated site ownership which he believes belongs to a Pension Fund and proposed that the Council contacts the trustees directly to introduce them to the relevant elements of Neighbourhood Plan and see if they are more responsive.

Cllr Smith also proposed that Council applies for Building Preservation Notices on the two buildings within the site that are in poor condition, but are of historical interest.

**Action:** Cllr. Andy Stokes to check the Land Registry for deeds to the site to determine actual ownership.

**Action:** Town Clerk to draft letter to DNP requesting information about initiating a preservation order.

**Action:** Cllr. Neil Smith to draft a letter to the pension fund.

**Meeting Closed at 9:15 pm.**

Signed ..... Date.....