

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in the Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 9th September 2015 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors: Ron Fox (Chair), Pam Barrett, Katie Coates, Billy Hartstein, Janet Jones, Mark Maish, Linus McCloskey, Simon Rines, Dan Simpson, Graham Squires, Andy Stokes and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

Press: No representatives of the Press

19 members of the public. (The grant recipients left the meeting after Agenda Item No: 3)

In attendance: Cllr Stuart Barker (County)

Part I. (Open to the Public)

The Chair opened the meeting and the Deputy Chair, Cllr Pam Barrett took over administration of the agenda and invited questions from the public.

15/97. Questions raised by the Public:

1) Concern regarding the loss of momentum with self-build initiatives when 40 people have expressed an interest within the community.

Cllr Simon Rines: Confirmed that self-build has been included in the Dartmoor Plan and allocated sites are being examined as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Suggestion that Dean Prior and South Brent could be linked to Buckfastleigh for self-build.

Cllr Simon Rines: Referred to the recent Housing Needs survey and how this is statistically valid. There is some contradiction between census data and affordable housing. Generally people are supportive of self-build.

Cllr Janet Jones: The proposed Strode Road development has not moved forward, but will make some enquiries. There is however, the issue of cost and hurdles such as infrastructure.

It was agreed that a link to the self-build information provided by the National Park should be included on the website.

2) What is happening with the Devonian site?

Cllr Simon Rines: A meeting with a representative of Devonian with the Town Council has been arranged for October to discuss potential development of the site and hasten the process.

The Town Council would like to have some input on the development of the site and the Neighbourhood Plan now has the support of Locality with technical expertise.

15/98. Grants Presentation to Local Groups and Organisations:

Councillor Ron Fox awarded the following grants:-

The Vintage Bus – £300

Wildspace Buckfastleigh - £250

Buckfastleigh Residents Association – £200
Community Care Trust – £250
Buckfastleigh Kings Cricket Club - £250
Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) - £100

It was noted that the deadline for the next round of grants is 14 October 2015.

15/99. Scoriton and Buckfastleigh Twinning Association – Update by Tim Coulton:

Tim Coulton and Anne Goulborn explained that the purpose of the Twinning Association is to link communities across different countries since the end of WWII. Membership of the Association gives a unique opportunity to experience life in a French home in Fontaine-Henri. The two twinned towns meet on alternate years between Devon and France and in between organise fundraising activities and socialising takes place to meet the cost of the bi-annual French visit. The Association now wish to entertain their guests locally, visiting local attractions such as the railway.

The group are planning to showcase local organic producers in 2017 and intend to apply for grant funding in addition to their own fund raising events. The Town Council was thanked for their support on previous occasions.

The Twinning Association currently has 40 members, but are actively seeking more and requested a link to the Town Council website.

15/100. Police Report:

No report received in time for this meeting. It was noted that James Yates is the new PCSO for Buckfastleigh.

15/101. Reports from County Councillor and District Councillors:

Cllr Stuart Barker: Teignbridge District Council - has a self-build policy incorporated in the Local Plan. The sites identified are all exception sites which must include social housing.

Devon County Council - encouraging self-help schemes for grass cutting.

Refugee Crisis – national arrangements are being developed and local Councils are waiting for the go ahead from Central Government. Lead Officers are in place to deal this which includes Plymouth and Torbay. Councils are considering housing and social care issues to establish how refugees can be integrated. An individual has to be granted asylum to be able to work in the UK and dispensation is being sought for integration into communities. There are already care issues regarding the placement of children and a coordinated effort is required. District Councils will deal with the accommodation requirements and it may be helpful to let them know of identified local sources of accommodation to consider if needed.

Parking Review - there is a need to examine different types of parking for example rural, urban or coastal. It is difficult to have individual policies for each community. Teignbridge is looking at charging methods for eg. mobile technology. A revenue of £2 million is received from the car parks across the district so the authority is dependent upon this source of income and if lost, Council Tax charges would be required to be increased to compensate this. It was noted that outsourcing loses control of this facility.

Old Totnes Road update – work will commence shortly although concern was expressed by a local resident as to where the cars will now park on Old Totnes Road? The scheduled work is however, a response to repeated requests by local residents in this area. The land immediately

underneath the A38 flyover belongs to the Highways Agency and vehicles must not park there due to risk of fire, particularly to the carriageway above.

15/102. Apologies:

Councillors: Neil Smith, Charlie Dennis (District) and John Nutley (District)

15/103. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

15/104. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15th July 2015:

Signed and approved by Councillor Ron Fox.

15/105. To receive the minutes of the Highways and Planning Meeting held on 2nd September 2015:

Noted.

15/106. To receive the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 29th July 2015:

Noted.

15/107. Elector Fund Application:

The Clerk and Cllr Stuart Barker explained the process of application.

It was agreed that more publicity is required and Cllr Katie Coates advised as to why the Valiant Soldier and Tourist Information Centre had benefitted from this fund in previous years.

A total fund of £3,127.30 is available for one or more projects and the following ideas were forwarded by Members for consideration:-

Replacement benches for Fore Street, seed funding, a compost site, a cycling project, review of the youth service for the town, the Wildspace project, Victoria Park redevelopment and swimming pool security. It was agreed that the various options should be looked at, but that the application should be deferred until the second application date due in early February 2016.

Members were asked if the fund would be advertised to the community or only Council led.

Decision: Agreed to defer and decide on a process for application with a view to finalising at the January Town Council meeting.

15/108. Appointment of a Handyman for the Town Hall - Update:

The Clerk reported that the advertisement had been unsuccessful. A suggestion was made to use a property management company and look at other Town Hall/community building examples.

Action: Other options to be explored.

15/109. Proposal to set up a review of Youth Provision in the Parish:

Youth provision in Buckfastleigh is fragmented with no secure funding for the Bungalow and two separate youth centres with different origins.

Cllr Stuart Barker: The Chapel Street Youth Club is on lease from the Diocese and has been a long standing, self-funding establishment run by volunteers. The Bungalow was originally funded from a youth charity set up by the District Council. It started as a voluntary organisation with a community development worker. Devon Youth Service helped to develop it and it has had various funding streams which have not been consistent.

It was suggested that the Bungalow could purchase the time of a youth worker, but it was acknowledged that local authorities are unlikely to fund the future of youth provision.

Cllr Stuart Barker: Attempts to integrate the youth centres together have been unsuccessful.

Cllr Pam Barrett: There needs to be a properly funded youth service and a review of service provision would be helpful.

Community Development Workers can do this and Cllr Barker offered to consult the Community Section of the County Council. The Independent Devon Youth Scheme have also agreed to sponsor the cost of a review for the parish.

15/110. Proposal to set up a review of Green/Outdoor Public Spaces in the Parish:

Item deferred as this subject will be incorporated in the Neighbourhood Plan once technical support from Locality has been established.

15/111. Chairman's Announcements:

None

15/112. Clerk's Announcements:

The Clerk advised the meeting that the Buckfastleigh Pantomime Group had reformed for a new production to take place in the Town Hall this December.

15/113. Correspondence:

- i) Future of the Town Clock (letter dated 17.08.15) – Cllr Graham Squires explained the history of the clock which is located in Fore Street above Searles electrical shop and that one side of it has not be operational for some time. The Buckfastleigh and District Society (BDS) who had originally funded and installed the clock under the insurance of the Town Council, have now folded and wish to pass ownership to the Council.
Decision: The Council agreed in principal to take ownership of the clock if it is repaired by using BDS funds and that the Town Council does not make any commitment to repair the clock in the future.
- ii) Response from Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) (letter dated 28.07.15) to a letter dated 8 July 2015 from the Town Council regarding DCC Planning Application ref. DCC/3784/2015. Cllr Stuart Barker: confirmed that the planning authority had made a mistake and had now requested a Visual Impact Assessment. When this is available the statutory consultees will be invited to comment.

Cllr Pam Barrett: the response from DNPA is not satisfactory and demonstrates a lack of understanding of the situation.

- iii) Email from Gilpins Demolition regarding the new Whitecleave Quarry Working Party (dated 19.08.15) – Question as to why the Town Council has arranged a working party when a local liaison group is already established? The relationship between the Buckfastleigh Community Forum (BCF) and the Council was also questioned.

Cllr Pam Barrett: referred to the election promotional material and the election results. Those Members with an affiliation to the BCF declared this at the time of the election. The meaning of the definition of a “forum” was given to the meeting and that there is no membership, but only a group of people who meet to discuss an issue. There is the need for a Chairman and co-ordinators, a mailing list, but no members. It was noted that Kathryn Hughes is now the sole Chairman following the resignation of Neil Smith as the co-chair.

Members were questioned again as to who is the BCF and how are ideas formulated?

Cllr Simon Rines: there is limited formality, meetings are advertised with open discussions and decisions are made with the agreement of the people present at the time. There is no lack of transparency and no duty to respond.

Further discussion took place regarding this matter with reference to the publication of minutes and the grant awarded by the Town Council at the time of the public enquiry. Terms of Reference will be established at the first meeting and the new group will be examining as to how complaints are logged. There is a valid remit for the Town Council to listen to the complaints of the community and by doing this concerns are raised and addressed properly.

Cllr Stuart Barker: Only the planning authority can deal with complaints and determine whether there is a breach. Immediate complaints can go directly to the quarry operator, but there is concern over the number of repeated complaints that are being issued.

A further email from the quarry operator was referred to concerning the alleged lack of consultation by the Neighbourhood Plan group with landowners, this will be addressed.

15/114. Reports from other meetings attended by Members:

Cllrs Katie Coates attended a Hospital League of Friends AGM. It was noted that there is a defibrillator at the Medical Centre and at the Fire Station if required.

Cllrs Katie Coates and Janet Jones reported that a new Managing Director has been appointed for Stagecoach in South Devon and the issue of timetables were raised.

Cllrs Coates and Jones had also attended a Clinical Commissioning Group engagement meeting.

Cllr Janet Jones reported that the Southpark Community Centre continues to do well with fund raising activities in addition to regular bookings.

Cllr Andy Stokes advised that 35 local residents had attended the first meeting of the Community Engagement workshop. Council resources were explained and feedback on priority issues that affect the town were noted. A follow up event is now required.

Cllrs Stokes, Barrett and Jones have formed a new cycling strategy group and have met with other local groups to examine cycling initiatives for Buckfastleigh and South Dartmoor. There is a need to promote the area as a more cycling friendly place for eg. the use of ebike schemes. Next meeting scheduled for 8th October.

Cllr Ron Fox had attended an event at Holybrook and is supportive of their planning proposals.

Cllrs Simon Rines and Ron Fox hosted a recent Councillor's surgery and it was noted that community transport is a particular need which will be looked at under the Transport Review as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllrs Dan Simpson and Graham Squires promoted the late night Christmas Event arranged for 9th December.

15/115. Reports from working parties attended by Members:

Included in the above agenda item.

15/116. Urgent Items:

Cllr Andy Stokes referred to the Syrian refugee crisis and that this is the worst humanitarian crisis of this nature since WWII. He raised the proposal to declare Buckfastleigh as a "refugee friendly town" and to urge residents to petition the Government to respond to the calls of the public to help. There is now an Aid for Syria collection in Buckfastleigh.

Cllr Stuart Barker reiterated that the District Council will be making accommodation available when required, but families will need to be processed.

He was asked as to what role the Town Council can take and it was agreed that the Council would signpost, encourage the signing of a petition and assist with a register for donations of help. A dialogue with Buckfast Abbey was also suggested following the Pope's recent announcements encouraging communities to help.

Action: It was agreed that Buckfastleigh should be declared as a "Refugee Friendly Town" and that the Council will help in whatever capacity is appropriate.

Meeting closed at 10.23pm.

Signed.....

Date.....