

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in the Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 15th July 2015 at 7.30 pm.

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

Press: No representatives of the Press

9 members of the public

In attendance: Cllr John Nutley (District) and Kathryn Hughes on behalf of the Buckfastleigh Community Forum (BCF)

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.

15/76. Questions raised by the Public:

1) Written complaint to Devonian regarding the overgrown derelict site and factory gate area adjacent to Bridge Street, Buckfastleigh which has not been responded to as yet.

A general discussion took place regarding the lack of communication from the owner and that this site will be a key element of the Neighbourhood Plan for the parish.

2) When will the Whitecleave Quarry working group be arranged as agreed at the June Town Council Meeting?

Cllr Pam Barrett: Confirmed that membership for the new working party will be advertised shortly.

15/77. Police Report:

No report received. The Clerk to request that a monthly summary would still be useful in the absence of a representative from the local police.

15/78. Connecting Devon and Somerset – Super Fast Broadband presentation:

Nina Goodwin gave a presentation as part of the Connecting Devon and Somerset programme which aims to help individuals and businesses make the most of Super Fast Broadband by providing free events, workshops and training to communities.

Super Fast Broadband is currently being installed in Buckfastleigh and more coverage is planned. Individuals must sign up to a provider and can refer to Youswitch.com for information. Nina invited questions from the Council and members of the public:

Cllr Andy Stokes: What training resources can be made available to our community?

The project can deliver 3 or 4 sessions to Buckfastleigh. This can be for groups as small as 4 or up to 20 people. The free sessions can be tailored to suit the groups level of existing

knowledge and experience and can be across a range of different technologies from smart phones to PCs. The sessions can be organised at any time to suit the needs of the community. There is a questionnaire available for people and groups to identify what training is needed and this can be accessed from the library and from:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Xs6keeIbdGoSSQufWqOc6RZJhZwPQsN_dEBK7JIKdiM/viewform

Kathryn Hughes: It should be noted that part of the town centre is not within the connection area.

This will be raised with BT.

Cllr Janet Jones: Suggestion that the library could hold a list for people to sign up to and express what they are particularly interested in.

Action:

Cllr Andy Stokes to contact local community groups to advise them of the session and Cllr Pam Barrett to advertise the free training now available. It was agreed that autumn would be the most suitable time for training to be undertaken. The Clerk will arrange suitable dates for the training events to take place in the Town Hall, probably October/November.

15/79. Apologies:

Councillors: Dan Simpson, Neil Smith, Stuart Barker (County and District) and Charlie Dennis (District)

Kate Cotton (Mid Devon Advertiser)

15/80. Councillors invited to declare any interests:

Cllrs Graham Squires and Andy Stokes: A pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No: 9) Minute No: 15/34. Urgent Items: Town Council Website and Email Hosting and Maintenance of the Town Hall Side Garden.

15/81. Urgent items:

No urgent items.

15/82. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 10th June 2015:

Signed and approved by Councillor Ron Fox.

15/83. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on 24th June 2015:

Signed and approved by Councillor Ron Fox.

15/84. To receive the minutes of the Highways and Planning Meeting held on 1st July 2015:

Noted.

15/85. To receive the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 24th June 2015:

Noted.

To resolve the following recommendations from Minute Nos:

15/33. Grant Applications

Decision: All applications resolved

15/33. Recommendation to hold an additional round of grant awards in autumn 2015

Decision: Agreed

15/34. Urgent Items: Town Council Website and Email Hosting and Maintenance of the Town Hall Side Garden – following advice from the District Council Monitoring Officer that a Councillor can be contracted to provide a service to a local authority.

Decision: It was agreed that a further £600.00 will be paid to Cllr Andy Stokes to complete the scheduled work to the Council website and £120.00 to Cllr Graham Squires to maintain the side garden of the Town

15/86. To adopt by resolution revised Standing Orders for Buckfastleigh Town Council:

Decision:

The above resolution was proposed by Cllr Andy Stokes and seconded by Cllr Simon Rines with all Members in agreement.

15/87. Proposal to create a Community Council:

A summary of this proposal had been circulated to Members by Cllr Andy Stokes.

Cllr Andy Stokes: Community and voluntary organisations are increasingly under pressure due to sources of funding being cut and the need to provide services from within the community is becoming ever greater. The Town Council wants to be proactive for positive change in the community and have proposed to look at the idea of setting up a ‘Community Council’ in order to strengthen our response to the changing local government financial situation as well as provide a number of other benefits.

Cllr Pam Barrett: A Community Council allows the town to discuss what its priorities are.

Cllr Billy Hartstein: Joining groups together enables greater funding opportunities.

Cllr Simon Rines: What will the structure of the Community Council be?

Cllr Andy Stokes: This will need further discussion.

Cllr Pam Barrett: An open meeting for the town will be arranged. There are quick wins that can be achieved.

Cllr Janet Jones: A Community Council may attract more people to join by being part of another group.

Member of the public: *The Council needs to look at the people who do not attend meetings and events and why? These need to be targeted.*

Cllr Janet Jones: Need to establish if the Community Council has a structure or will be ad hoc.

Cllr Pam Barrett: A terms of reference will be required to establish this.

Action:

Cllr Andy Stokes to put this discussion document out to the community, look at other models and invite all the community groups within the area to the first community event to be held on Wednesday 12th August 2015.

Cllr Janet Jones: A reminder to Members that Southpark Community Centre requires Council representation as the Town Council is a stakeholder.

Decision:

It was agreed that Cllr Jones will be the Town Council representative to Southpark and it was also noted that Cllr Katie Coates is the nominated representative to the Teignbridge Association of Local Councils (TALC) although other Members may attend these meetings too.

15/88. To discuss the management needs of the Buckfastleigh Town Hall Trust and the frequency of Trust meetings:

This item was deferred until September for discussion.

15/89. Proposal to appoint a Handyman for the Town Hall:

Following discussion it was agreed that there are two options regarding the appointment of a Handyman to carry out minor jobs to the Town Hall:-

1. Offer a minimum contract of five hours per month;
2. Use a list of freelance local tradesmen.

Kathryn Hughes: Suggestion that a service level agreement could be used if under option 2, there is no response within a given time for a job to be carried out then no further work will be offered or alternatively a contract could be taken out with an existing handyman service.

Cllr Janet Jones: A trial pool of three or four workmen could be used.

Decision:

Two options went to the vote as follows:-

1. Advertise for a Handyperson and Deputy as a casual employee paid hourly for a minimum of five hours per month – 5 votes
2. Hold a list of preferred tradesmen – 5 votes

The Chairman abstained from the casting vote and after consultation with the Clerk Option 1) was agreed.

15/90. Chairman's Announcements:

None

15/91. Clerk's Announcements:

None

15/92. Correspondence:

Letter dated 11.06.15 from the Post Office concerning the proposal to move Buckfast Post Office into the Mill Shop within the old Axminster site now agreed. Noted

15/93. Reports from County Councillor and District Councillors:

Cllr J. Nutley: Together with Cllr Charlie Dennis and Cllr Ron Fox, attended the raising of the Armed Forces Flag at the District Council Offices as part of a week of celebrations and a chance to show support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community.

Cllr Dennis and Cllr Nutley also attended their first Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to discuss the Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document. It contains detailed advice and direction on the implementation of a number of affordable housing related policies. This will go to the Executive Committee for discussion and to full Council for adoption.

Teignbridge District Council are setting up two further committees, a Car Parking Task Group to look at the management of all Teignbridge car parks and a Rail Line Research Group to examine all aspects of the rail line, it's security, options etc.

'A Life on Dartmoor during WW1' exhibition is on show until September at the Princetown Visitors' Centre organised on behalf of the Dartmoor Trust and National Park.

A report from Cllr Stuart Barker was summarised by the Clerk:-

***Grass Cutting** – Devon County Council have a responsibility to keep junctions, visibility splays and signage clear of grass. This is the limit of their legal responsibility which is covered by Council Tax. Additional cutting was previously funded before the severe reduction in government funding.*

Teignbridge District Council have rejected the contract offered this year to continue with grass verge cutting and the County Council have therefore made a temporary arrangement with South West Highways who in turn have engaged a contractor. The temporary nature of this work is because the Council is keen to encourage local communities to take responsibility for their own area. The Town and Parishes Fund is already being used by an increasing number of communities to fund grass cutting.

Teignbridge have recently announced that they will be cutting some grass verges in housing areas. Their responsibility also includes closed cemeteries and recreation areas not under Community or Parish Council control. Teign Housing are also responsible for cutting the communal areas and verges in housing areas adopted by them.

Many people see the verges as a source of wildlife encouragement by the emergence of wild flowers.

***Traffic Orders** – Funding is still an issue with regards to the new traffic regulations for Old Totnes Road and Plymouth Road. The urgency of the situation has been stressed to the relevant officers.*

***Whitecleave Planning Application** – Planners have agreed that the application is one which concerns visual amenity. It was officers who incorrectly indicated that ecology was involved.*

A visual impact assessment will be carried out before this application is determined by Committee. The quarry operator has been asked to provide the relevant report. When this is received it will be circulated to consultees, including the Town Council, thus giving further opportunity to comment.

At the present time the County Council is in the process of providing a new version of the planning website which should address some of the issues about being able to see representations made and also some other issues requested by local residents.

***Skate Park Funding** – The £5,000 funding was agreed by the relevant committee in March 2015 and is from the Investing in Devon Fund. The fund does not transfer money to projects in advance, but is available when the project has placed orders for the equipment. This prevents any problems if a project should not proceed and the funds have to be recovered.*

15/94. Reports from other meetings attended by Members:

Cllrs Mark Maish and Andy Stokes hosted a composting and recycling event in the Town Hall which was attended by approximately 55 people. Ben Bryant, the District Council Recycling Officer and Nicky Scott from ‘Proper Job’ at Chagford also gave presentations. A new group has been created as a result of this event and are committed to the project.

Action:

Next meeting to be arranged for September.

Cllr Simon Rines: Martin Scoble and John Walters have agreed to draw up a proposal for a biodiversity plan for the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan. Some Members met at the Old Dairy Crest site in Totnes known as the Atmos Project and took advice from an expert in Neighbourhood Plans. As a result of the Neighbourhood Plan event held in May, it was agreed that a traffic consultation should be carried out as an addition to the Plan. It was stressed that the Plan had not been delayed, but will be a stronger document when completed.

Action:

Members agreed that the Town Council should apply for technical support funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government Locality Fund to support a traffic consultation.

Cllr Katie Coates: There is concern regarding the lack of contact with the owner of the Devonia site and not to raise public expectations concerning the redevelopment of this site.

Cllr Simon Rines, Kate Targett and Judith Hart attended the first working party meeting for the next edition of the Town Guide. Cllr Rines felt that the meeting was productive and that the Clerk’s idea for a wildlife theme had been well received.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The Swimming Pool Committee had met and the revenue for this season has already exceed that of previous years. Opening is to be extended to September with a slightly reduced timetable. The pool is being used regularly by the local schools.

Cllr Ron Fox: The bollard knocked over by a speeding vehicle on Crest Hill has demonstrated the ongoing conflict between traffic and residents in that area. Emma Nicks, the County Highways Officer, will be arranging a speed measurement device and a discussion

with residents as to how this situation can be resolved. It was agreed that options for introducing a 20 mph zone should be explored as part of the Neighbourhood Plan traffic and transport section.

Member of the public: *There are also speed problems on Wallaford Road and this issue cannot be dealt with in isolation.*

Cllr Pam Barrett: The traffic consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan will look at traffic calming measures.

Cllr Janet Jones: The Friends of the Library had reported an increased footfall, fund raising is continuing and the library is now part of the Devon County Council reading scheme.

Cllrs Janet Jones and Mark Maish attended the Whitecleave Quarry Liaison Group meeting together with Kathryn Hughes.

Cllr John Nutley has spoken to Stephen Belli, the Director of Planning at the National Park regarding their response of no objection to the recent Quarry application. It was noted that the Park have not responded as yet to the letter sent by the Town Council.

Action:

It was agreed that the issue of the visual impact assessment, asbestos and noise testing will be discussed at the new working party. The first aim of the group will be to establish a Terms of Reference.

It was agreed that the Town Council should also have a site visit.

The process of registering complaints needs to be advertised to the public. Cllr Nutley confirmed that the operator will inform the Town Council and residents to this effect.

Kathryn Hughes: A summary should be publicised with advanced notice of a working timetable. A noise mitigation scheme is now required as the raptors on the site have fledged. This will be monitored by the BCF.

The next Local Liaison Group meeting will be held on Wednesday 7th October.

15/95. Reports from working parties attended by Members:

The Committee Structures and Council Representation Working Party has met and discussed possible new ways of working for committees and working parties. It has been suggested that some issues currently discussed in Committee should be brought to full Council for discussion, for example, domestic planning applications could remain with the Planning Committee, but applications of community interest, such as communal or commercial spaces should go to full Council. There are no written proposals as yet for changes to the committee structure and these will be forthcoming at a future date.

15/96. Urgent Items:

None

Meeting closed at 10.07pm.