

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 13th March 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors Andy Stokes (Chair), Pam Barrett, Janet Jones, Ron Fox, Huw Cox, Gwena Harman and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

In attendance: Cllr John Nutley (District) and 1 member of the public

Press: No Press in attendance

19/174. Apologies: Cllrs Kate Paxman, Pamela Forbes, Dan Simpson and Stuart Barker (County and District).

No apologies received from Cllr Ben Cattrall

19/175. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

19/176. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 13th February 2019:

Signed and approved by Councillor Andy Stokes

19/177. Questions and comments from the public: None

19/178. Reports from Police, County and District Councillors:

No police report

Cllr Stuart Barker – Devon County Council (DCC) Report was read out by the Chair:

- Proposed traffic orders as a result of complaints/requests: Higher Mill Lane (to maintain access for buses); Market Close (to prevent inappropriate parking on north side); Chapel Street near junction with Crest Hill (to prevent inappropriate parking and vehicles driving on the pavement); Oaklands Road (to prevent inappropriate parking where the road narrows)
- DCC budget: has had a £13.4 million cut in money allocated this year. The children's service had an increase of £11.5 million (9.4%) and adult social care an increase of £4.5 million. Highways funding has a small increase to £54 million, with a grant of an extra £18 million received to carry out repairs and drainage works.
- The Communities Together Fund (previously known as the Elector Fund) is being replaced next year by a new community fund which parishes and community organisations can bid for. Details to be confirmed.
- Currently ongoing are issues with parking in Station Road and Plymouth and with the safety of children going to and from Buckfastleigh Primary School.

Action: Clerk to request further detail regarding the proposals for Plymouth Road.

It was highlighted that the new double yellow lines are not being enforced and the issue of where people can park their cars at night has not been addressed. The car parks and on-street parking are all full.

£4,995 has been awarded for Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Community Care (£2,497 each) to pay for a volunteer coordinator. DCC is taking over the Communities Together Fund but it was noted that match funding is always more difficult for poorer communities to achieve.

Cllr John Nutley – Teignbridge District Council (TDC) Report:

- The budget was set in February for 2019/20
- Parking charges will be increased for periods over one hour and parking permits increased by £60 per year. Cllr Nutley has objected to this as it will harm town centre businesses.
- Capital expenditure of s106 funds has been approved for drainage improvement works to some of Council's playing fields
- There was discussion of the Newton Abbot hotel development. There were four proposals: to build a 72-bedroom hotel, to build a 100-bedroom hotel, retirement apartments or building above the surface of the car park to create a hotel.
- A South West Mutual Bank is to be formed with support from the Council of £49,995 from capital receipts.

Cllr Pam Barrett: There are huge variations between car parking fees in the district. Why is there no standard policy? It is outrageous that monthly parking permit charges are so much higher than for those who can afford to pay on an annual basis.

The Town Council's proposals regarding parking have not been considered by TDC and it is clear that the Parking Review Group has no power and has not met for at least 5 months. Is there an overall parking policy? If not, why not? It seems only the TDC Executive makes the decisions.

19/179. Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 27th February.

Noted.

To resolve the following recommendations from Minute Nos:
19/67 Review of Risk Assessment Management 2019
19/68 Review of the Statement of Internal Control 2019
19/69 Review of Assets Register 2019

All items resolved

19/180. Minutes of the Environment and Transport Committee held on 6th March 2019:

Noted.

19/181. Town Council Projects – to discuss the planning, management and communication issues for existing and new projects for 2019:

No further updates.

19/182. Proposal to facilitate and fund the Bike Bus Initiative for 2019:

Cllr Pam Barrett highlighted the range of Bike Bus users, including the disabled. Three sessions will be offered this year. An article will be written for social media and the website to explain that this pilot initiative did not cost the Council to facilitate in 2018 thanks to Cllr Barrett's successful grant application plus donations from users. The estimated cost for 2019 will be £60.00.

The Chair thanked Cllr Barrett for her work on this initiative which was seconded by Cllr Ron Fox.

Decision: Members unanimously voted in favour of funding the Bike Bus for this summer.

19/183. Dartmoor Headwater Natural Flood Management Pilot Project and screening of “High Water, Common Ground” at the Town Hall:

Buckfastleigh has been selected as a pilot area/project for flood management. The Town Council supports the Environment Agency (EA) in this initiative. It involves upstream management working with landowners to carry out enhancements and community led projects. There will be natural flood management for the rivers Mardle and Dean e.g. bog restorations, planting trees in river valleys. There has been a generally supportive response from landowners and the project will be good for biodiversity and for tourism. This may provide mitigation for planning applications for housing developments.

The EA and Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) need to work together on this to enhance the natural environment. The film “High Water” will be shown in the Town Hall to attract volunteers.

Cllr Stokes thanked Cllr Barrett for all her flood work with the EA and the amount of time she has invested in this.

19/184. Climate Emergency Motion

The Chair read out the motion which states that humans have caused irreversible climate change and current plans and actions are not enough to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Beyond this level of increase the consequences will be devastating. Therefore, all levels of government should commit to achieving carbon neutrality as quickly as possible.

The motion proposes that the Council pledge to do whatever is in our power to make the town of Buckfastleigh carbon neutral by 2030. As a first step we will set up a Citizens’ Assembly (working group) to make recommendations for action, as well as working with other local authorities to find best practice methods to limit climate change.

Decision: The motion was proposed by Cllr Pam Barrett and seconded by Cllr Huw Cox. All Members voted unanimously to support the motion.

DCC have committed to carbon neutrality but by 2050 which research suggests will be too late. TDC are currently discussing it. What are other authorities’ positions?

Cllr Barrett said the motion should include environmental enhancement. It would be good to work in partnership with Ashburton on this. There is a need to raise awareness and make little changes such as phasing out the use of plastic cups and straws.

Action: The Town Council will convene a public meeting and enrol volunteers. Cllrs Stokes and Harman to arrange. It was suggested to involve children and it was agreed that there is a wide range of ideas to be looked at.

19/185. Chair’s Announcements:

Cllr Stokes has organised the showing in the Town Hall of the film “Groundswell” about privatisation in the NHS.

19/186. Clerk’s Announcements: None

19/187. Correspondence:

A planning application has been received to relocate the dance school from Dart Mills to the Devonia site. 0110/19 Proposed: Change of use (part of second floor) to dance studio at Town Mill, Devonia Sheepskins.

Decision: Members agreed to support this.

19/188. Reports from other meetings and working parties attended by Members:

Cllr Janet Jones attended the Buckfast Village Hall meeting. Draft heads of terms have been circulated. Buckfast Abbey has offered to refurbish the old canteen for a new Village Hall, but there is concern regarding reasonable rates for users. The management committee has sought legal advice and the vote will be for anyone over 18 within Buckfastleigh and Buckfast. Surrounding parishes have not been included in the vote although they are areas of benefit which contravenes the requirements of the charity document. What constitutes a reasonable rent? Members agreed that the current rates should be retained with an allowance for inflation. The next meeting will be held in June.

Cllr Andy Stokes gave an update on the new meeting structure. The first meeting will include definition of terms of reference and delegated powers for each committee.

Cllr Jones attended a Friends of Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Hospital meeting which included a discussion about the use of the well-being facilities. It was agreed that the clinics are well used for e.g. by podiatry, counselling and physiotherapy.

Cllr Jones confirmed that she had been invited to an International Women's Day event at County Hall following her nomination by the Town Council for her years of service to Buckfastleigh. There was a presentation of Certificates of Appreciation to "Women of the Community."

19/189. Items requiring urgent attention: None

The meeting closed at 9.03 pm.