

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 26th June 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors: Andy Stokes (Chair), Huw Cox, David Patrick, Ron Fox, Sylvee Phillips and Inga Page (Admin Assistant)

In attendance: 6 members of the public

Press: No Press in attendance

19/39. Apologies: Cllrs Pam Barrett, John Bailey, Pamela Forbes, Gwena Harman, Darren Greep, Kate Kayley and Judith Hart (Town Clerk). No apologies received from Sue Clarke.

19/40. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

19/41. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Annual Town Council meeting held on 15th May 2019:

Signed and approved by Councillor Andy Stokes

19/42. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 22nd May 2019:

Signed and approved by Councillor Andy Stokes

19/43. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 5th June 2019:

Signed and approved by Councillor Andy Stokes

19/44. Questions and comments from the public:

Guy Watkin of Buckfastleigh Fire Station reported that he and his 3 colleagues had come to this meeting as members of the public concerned about the proposed cuts to the Fire and Rescue Service, which are the biggest cuts in the history of the Fire Service. It is proposed to close Ashburton Fire Station, along with up to 7 others, as part of their “Safer Together” initiative. Guy presented various pieces of information he felt the Town Council should be aware of:

- The number of incidents attended by Ashburton Fire Station each year is much higher than the Fire Service figures provided, as they only count incidents in the Ashburton area and not others that they assist with out of area (for e.g. Buckfastleigh). In major incidents (e.g. the recent explosion at Barn Park), more than one fire engine is needed to deal safely and effectively with the incident. Ashburton is just 8 minutes behind and can provide invaluable extra staff. The next closest engines are Newton Abbot or Totnes (about 28 minutes away).
- The Fire Service says it needs to save £8.5 million each year. It has reserves which are increasing in value each year by £4.5 million. Guy will send links to the Fire Service website with information that can inform the Town Council’s response.
- The plan is to move/centralise fire stations (in response to where populations are now larger e.g Newton Abbot) and then have 5 or 6 “roving” fire engines.

- It is important for the Town Council to voice its opinion during the 12 weeks of consultation and also before this Friday's meeting which will consider 8 proposals for cuts (all involving the closure of Ashburton).

Action: It was agreed that Cllr Stokes will draft a letter of opposition to the cuts on behalf of the Town Council and send it to the Fire Service, with copies to the media. Cllr Stokes will also involve other local councils who will be affected, e.g. South Brent, Poundsgate, Dean Prior, Holne and Buckland.

Cllr Huw Cox is in communication with Cllr Parker Khan in Ashburton and they will be going to other Parish Councils to discuss joint action. It was agreed that it is important for all the effected parishes to work together.

Cllr Stokes said a public meeting will be planned during the consultation period to inform the wider public of the issues.

The 4 firefighters left the meeting at 8.10pm.

A member of the public expressed concern about the speed of traffic on Chapel Street and asked about the campaign for a 20mph speed limit. Cllr Cox is contacting Devon County Council (DCC) about various traffic issues and will ask them for an update on this.

It was also reported that Britain in Bloom will be judging in the town on Thursday 4th July and they would like access to the Wildspace Garden. Someone will need to be there to open the gate and explain the proposed plans. It was also suggested that residents should be informed on social media that judging is taking place and asked to tidy up around the town.

19/45. Questions to District and County Councillors

Cllr Stokes asked about progress with the 30-minute free parking at the Globe car park which was to be discussed at Teignbridge District Council's Parking Review Group. This group seems not to have met in at least a year. Cllr Cox said all small towns want a similar thing and there may now be enough District Councillors to lobby for a change. Cllr Cox was asked to find out when the Parking Review Group will meet and report on progress with this.

Cllr Patrick suggested the loss in revenue could be balanced out by charging a bit more for longer term parking. Traders in the town are losing out because people do not want to pay for 30 minutes parking when they just want to buy a newspaper.

Cllr Patrick drew attention to DCC's On-Street Parking consultation which involves 4 new areas with restrictions and asked if this had been discussed with Teignbridge District Council (TDC). The proposals represent a compromise between road safety and loss of parking because of yellow lines.

Cllr Cox reported that 40% of black bin contents is food waste and TDC is making an effort to remind people of where it should go.

Action: Cllr Cox to send Inga the relevant material to put it on the Town Council website and Facebook page.

It was also agreed to ask TDC for a tetrapak carton recycling bank in Buckfastleigh.

19/46. Resolution to adopt revised Standing Orders reviewed at the Council Matters meeting held on 12 June 2019.

This was deferred as there is an ongoing discussion about a councillor voting if s/he has a non-pecuniary interest i.e. is on the board of the organisation being voted on. Cllr Stokes has been given legal advice that it is not a statutory requirement to abstain from voting. A member just has to declare an interest. Legal advice to be circulated. It was also suggested that the legal advice is sent to TDC Monitoring Officer for a second opinion.

19/47. Review of proposed designs for a new visitors' sign at the entrance to the South Devon Railway.

Cllr Stokes apologised that other designs have not yet materialised and that only one design has been submitted so far. Various suggestions were made about this design and an electronic version will be sent out for the next meeting when this item will once again be on the agenda.

19/48. Chair's Announcements: None

19/49. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Patrick announced the Community Engagement Day on 14th July called Upstream/Downstream. It will feature a film on natural flood management, activities, a walk around the town and a trip to the headwaters of the Dean Burn with a picnic.

19/50. Items requiring Urgent Attention: None

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.