

BUCKFASTLEIGH MATTERS MEETING

Minutes of the Buckfastleigh Matters Meeting held in Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 3rd July 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors Andy Stokes (Chair), Pam Barrett, Sue Clarke, Huw Cox, Pamela Forbes, Ron Fox, David Patrick, Sylvee Phillips, Gwena Harman and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

In attendance: Cllr Stuart Barker, 3 members of the public

Press: No Press in attendance

19/34. Apologies: Cllrs John Bailey, Darren Greep and Kate Kayley

19/35. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

19/36. Questions and comments from the public:

Question concerning a recent inspection of Fore Street – the Clerk advised that Devon County Council (DCC) will be carrying out improvement works to the pavements.

John Goulding advised that the Britain in Bloom judging will take place on Thursday 4th July.

19/37. Minutes of the Buckfastleigh Matters meeting held on 5th June 2019 and review of actions:

Signed by Cllr Stokes.

Actions from this meeting:

- A Larger Grant Application has been sent to the Christmas Fair Committee as agreed.
- The first meeting of the new Events Working Party has been arranged for Monday 5th August.
- Cllr David Patrick – the revised surface water strategy consultation for the Holne Road development has been deferred until 22nd September. Members had already agreed that the proposed strategy is inadequate and noted that DCC has raised similar concerns. Cllr Patrick to draft a response and circulate for comment.
- Premier Inn planning application for the Dolbeare site at Ashburton. – Ashburton Town Council have an extension until 25th July and will forward their comments to Buckfastleigh Town Council.
Action: Cllr Stokes to circulate comments and add to the Council Matters Agenda for the July meeting.
- Cllr Patrick confirmed he had responded to the Environment Agency consultation.
- Cllr Cox attended the River Dart Charter Workshop.
- Hello Summer – no response was received from Sound Communities to participate in the programme of activities.
- The contractor is liaising with Searle's Electrical shop to fix the current problem with the Town Clock.

19/38. Planning Application 0251/19: To build Premier Inn at Dolbeare Business Park, Ashburton:

Deferred to the July Council Matters meeting.

19/39. Response to proposed closure of Ashburton Fire Station:

A public meeting organised by staff of the Fire Service will take place on Friday 19th July in Ashburton Town Hall. The consultation by the Fire Authority is on Monday 22nd July at St. Lawrence Chapel in Ashburton.

Cllr Stuart Barker said there were inconsistencies in the report from the Fire Authority. The recommendations are now split into separate proposals and not all the information has been provided or is accurate. Callouts to other areas to assist are not counted in the figures and therefore do not reflect the true number. There are high numbers of listed and thatched buildings in both Ashburton and Buckfastleigh so the proposed cover would not be adequate.

Cllr Pam Barrett: Who are the elected representatives for Buckfastleigh?

Cllr Barker: Population dictates the number of representatives who are County Councillors, the nearest of which are from Kingsteignton and Torbay.

Cllr Barrett: Why does the Fire Authority has substantial reserves?

Cllr Barker: Devon and Somerset Fire Authority are 400 firefighters short but the budget for the full number each year is still agreed, hence the reserves.

Cllr Stokes has already sent a letter of objection and Cllr Cox wrote to the Fire Service before the first meeting held on 28th June 2019. County Councillors were not aware of all the information.

Cllr Cox suggested holding a public meeting in Buckfastleigh as closure in Ashburton will have a significant impact on the town.

Cllr Barker encourages people to write letters of objection. The consultation ends in September. He explained that the site in Ashburton is owned while other sites are leased, and the authority is keen to help fund the new station to be built at Newton Abbot.

Cllr Patrick: There are only three questions on the consultation which are weighted and do not give a true picture. The argument is that there is increased demand in some areas and not in others, so they are moving the engines around to reflect demand.

Cllr Barrett: Why are some County Councillors supporting these proposals and who are they?

Cllr Barker: There is a split vote for and against. There is only one proposed closure in Somerset and Avon. Most of the Devon Councillors are opposed to this, but there is no recorded vote.

Cllr Stokes: Which County Councillors voted against the proposed closure.

Cllr Barrett suggested sending letters of objection to each Councillor and to involve other councils such as Totnes and Dartmouth.

Action: Clerk to write to all the County Councillors and include the response of the Town Council.

It was noted that there are no consultation dates in the evening, so full-time workers are excluded from participation. It is important that this proposal is widely publicised and that the public are encouraged to respond in writing.

Action: Cllr Cox will be attending other parish meetings as the District Council representative and agreed to arrange a public meeting for Buckfastleigh.

The consultation ends on Friday 20th September.

19/40. Proposal to create and promote a wildlife and biodiversity plan for Buckfastleigh to include how green spaces managed:

On Wednesday 4th September at the Buckfastleigh Matters meeting, Donna Cox from Moor Meadows and wildlife specialist John Walters will make a presentation to this meeting. Cllr Cox has been consulting with Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) about the various areas in the parish which are or could be reserved as areas of wildlife conservation e.g. the Duckspond, the Town Hall wildlife garden and the Holy Trinity churchyard. Coordination of the various volunteers is needed and Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) are keen to provide some too. Teignbridge District Council are looking at planting more trees.

Cllr Forbes and the Town Ranger have walked the footpaths within the parish which are managed by Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) which are overgrown. The area above the caves is in a poor state and yet has been identified as a proposed walk by DNPA. There are faded DWT signs and fencing for an unknown purpose all of which have been reported.

Cllr Barrett: The 'Life on the Verge' project is ongoing. A long-term management plan for the green spaces is needed. The Ranger has been creating maps of green spaces. It is important to promote and publicise the September meeting to gauge public opinion. The Council needs to know if the community supports the proposal to take over green spaces from Teignbridge District Council (TDC). DWT representatives will also attend this meeting. Communication is needed with all involved.

Cllr Barker: Most of the verges belong to DCC and contracted to TDC for grass cutting. Wildflower seeds are being distributed to individuals however, there is conflict between those who want grass and wildflowers cut or not cut.

John Goulden highlighted a new scheme where blue hearts are used to identify areas of wildflowers. He raised concern that the Council is undertaking too many projects which have funding allocated but not enough resources to see them through.

19/41. Wildspace Management Plan:

A costed plan is needed.

Action: Clerk to forward Lucinda's plan and Ray's schedule to all the councillors for information.

19/42. Review of proposed designs and costs for new visitors' sign at entrance to South Devon Railway:

Four draft designs were circulated to the Members, but it was agreed that the green background to three of the designs may not show up against the trees and that a larger font should be used.

Maureen Tuffnell who had initiated this proposal asked that the Council makes a decision to avoid a further time delay.

Decision: Following a vote Members agreed to the new design and installation of the sign with the white background presented by Maureen at a cost of £390.00.

19/43. Chair's Announcements:

The Teignbridge Climate Action Group will meet on Thursday 4th July in Newton Abbot.

As the NHS marks its 70th birthday various demonstrations have been organised to commemorate this event.

Cllrs Phillips and Stokes will represent the Town Council at the Dartmoor National Park Forum to be held on 10th July 2019.

The Chair gave the following reminders about upcoming meetings and events:

- Upstream event on Sunday 14th July at the Town Hall organised by the Environment Agency followed by a walkabout and picnic on the Moor.
- Representatives of the Town Council and South Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust meeting on Thursday 11th July
- Informal meeting with the Valiant Soldier trustees on Thursday 18th July – Cllrs Stokes, Barrett and Patrick to attend.

19/44. Councillors' updates regarding matters relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Barrett has organised community training in grant writing on Saturday 6th July at the Town Hall this will be followed by social media training on Tuesday 30th July. Does the Council want this to continue to facilitate this and who will organise it?

It was acknowledged that this was requested at the Traders Meeting. Local businesses would like bespoke training and delivered for free.

Cllr Cox does not believe that the traders should have free training as their businesses should fund this. Cllr Stokes said they have asked for Town Council support and this is one way it could be met, but a proposal is needed to agree what can be provided.

Action: Raise as an agenda item at the July Council Matters meeting.

Cllr Fox had attended a working group meeting with representatives of South Dartmoor Academy. Rachel Shaw, CEO and Executive Principal and Angela Barry, Interim Executive Support were in attendance. Rachel claims she has not had the time to respond to the Town Council Freedom of Information request. The Trust having not met the statutory deadline for a response is now in breach of the FOI. Angela Barry was advised of this in writing by the Clerk.

Action: Members agreed if no documents have been received prior to the Council Matters meeting on 11th July the Clerk should proceed to report this breach to the Information Commissioner's Office.

19/45. Items requiring urgent attention: None

The meeting closed at 8.53 pm.