

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Matters Meeting held in Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 11th December 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors: David Patrick (Chair), Andy Stokes, Pam Barrett, John Bailey, Huw Cox, Ron Fox, Gwena Harman, Kate Kayley and Judith Hart (Town Clerk)

In attendance: No public present

Press: No Press in attendance

19/79. New appointment of Chair for the Council Matters Committee:

Cllr Andy Stokes proposed Cllr David Patrick as the new Chair of the Council Matters Committee which was seconded by Cllr Pam Barrett with all Members present in agreement.

19/80. Apologies: Cllrs Susan Clarke, Pamela Forbes, Darren Greep and Sylvee Phillips.

19/81. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

19/82. Questions and comments from the public: None

19/83. Minutes of the Council Matters Meeting held on 13th November 2019 and review of actions from this meeting:

Signed by Cllr David Patrick

Actions:

- Barn Park Housing Development – residents of Barn Park have agreed to attend the Dartmoor National Park Development Management Committee when it meets in the New Year to raise their objections to this application.
- Cllrs Stokes, Patrick and the Clerk met on 9th December to review and propose a revised meeting structure – draft plan to be circulated for discussion at the next Council Matters meeting.
- See Minute 19/86 below.
- The Clerk has put out a call for new trustees for the Town Hall, but no expressions of interest has been received. Members agreed that further publicity which includes a specific skill set is needed.

19/84. Budget Analysis Report 01.11.19 – 30.11.19: Noted

19/85. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.11.19 – 30.11.19: Noted

19/86. To discuss the draft Budget and Precept 2020/21:

A slightly amended draft budget and precept calculation had been circulated to Members for comment. Cllr Stokes explained how budget estimates are reached and highlighted the following:

- It is proposed that £5,000 from the estimated surplus from the 2019/20 budget should be ring-fenced for a new environmental and climate change budget and that the remainder of the surplus should be placed in reserves.
- Due to an increase in subscriptions and licences it is proposed that this budget is increased to reflect the new charges for 2020/21.
- The website budget has been amended to include the additional cost of using digital media such as the installation of the new e-noticeboards around the town.

- Following recent community consultation, no new major projects have been identified for the 2020/21 budget. Feedback, further consultation and resources will need to be determined before any new projects are factored into the 2021/22 budget.
- The proposed increase to the precept is 1.33% - a budget increase of £1,929 from £145,224 for 2019/20 to £147,153 for 2020/21.

Decision: Recommendation to resolve the draft budget at the Town Council meeting scheduled for 22nd January 2020. Proposed by Cllr Stokes, seconded by Cllr Cox with all Members present in agreement.

19/87. Review of updated Financial Regulations:

The Clerk referred to minor amendments highlighted in the latest Model Financial Regulations issued in July 2019 as recommended by the Council's Internal Auditor.

Decision: Recommendation to adopt revised Regulations at the January full Council meeting. Proposed by Cllr Stokes, seconded by Cllr Bailey with all Members in agreement.

19/88. To agree a strategy for the use and disposal of the Town Council's Solar Panels:

Following the withdrawal of government incentives to install solar panels and sell surplus energy to the National Grid, Members agreed that the Council's solar panels should be offered for sale at £50.00 each with a discount offered if the buyer wishes to purchase several.

Decisions:

- Recommendation to resolve at full Council to sell the Town Council's solar panels to individuals for domestic use and local organisations as required.
- Recommendation to full Council to ring-fence the current Solar Panel Project fund of £9,850 for energy and efficiency projects for the Town Hall identified by the energy audit.
- Recommendation to full Council to ring-fence all sales from the solar panels for the above purpose.

Actions:

- Cllr Cox and Fox to advertise the opportunity to purchase the solar panels via social media and liaise with potential customers.
- Cllr Stokes to send Cllr Cox details about the solar panels currently in store.

19/89. Councillor updates regarding matters relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Andy Stokes gave an update concerning the annual Christmas Community meal and that there are still places available.

Cllr Pam Barrett proposed that the Clerk should draft an article to celebrate her recent qualification, the Certificate in Local Council Administration which has enabled the Town Council to have the General Power of Competence. The Council will no longer have to identify specific powers to undertake an activity which will enhance its role in the community.

19/90. Items requiring Urgent Attention:

Linus McCloskey will be leaving the Buckfastleigh Citizens Advice Outreach Service in the New Year. Members agreed that Linus's work in the town should be acknowledged and conveyed their thanks and good wishes on behalf of the Town Council. It is understood that a new Citizens Advice Advisor has been appointed for Buckfastleigh.

The meeting closed at 8.23pm.