

# BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2025 at 7.00pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Paul Georghiades (Deputy Chair), John Bailey, Joanna De Groot-Marzec, Ron Fox, Sylvee Phillips and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

**In attendance:** Cllrs Jack Major (Teignbridge District Council) and Cllr Stuart Rogers (Teignbridge District Council and Devon County Council), Dean Kinsella (Dartmoor National Park Authority), PCSO Tamzin Campbell-Moseley and 41 members of the public

**Press:** None

**25/100. Apologies for absence:** Cllrs Sue Clarke, Steven Burch, Ben Leaney (Buckfastleigh Town Council) and John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council)

**Councillors invited to declare any interests:** Cllr Georghiades expressed an interest in Agenda Item No. 4 as the owner of land adjacent to the Barn Park site.

**25/101. To approve and sign the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and review actions from this meeting:**

Minutes signed by Cllr Paul Georghiades.

**Actions:** No outstanding actions

**25/102. To approve and sign the minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2025 and review actions from this meeting:**

Minutes signed by Cllr Paul Georghiades.

**Actions:** No outstanding actions

**25/103. Questions and comments from the public:** None

The Chair advised members of the public that both Cllrs Major and Rogers who are Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNP) members are not permitted to comment on this application during the course of this meeting.

**25/104. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest:**

*Planning Application 0615/18 – Land west of Barn Park, Buckfastleigh – Erection of 28 Dwellings (7 affordable and 21 open market), estate road, 50 parking spaces and garden areas.*

Update by Dean Kinsella, Director of Spatial Planning, Dartmoor National Park Authority

Dean Kinsella explained his role to the meeting and that he had offered to attend to try to allay any fears and comments regarding this long running planning application. He is aware of the high public interest and there are concerns regarding timings and out of date reports. The authority is reviewing the application and had hoped that more information would be available from the developer prior to this meeting.

He is aware that Highways and Ecology have raised questions regarding data and that there is

concern with drainage, underground springs and surface water run-off onto other properties and land. Further reports and clarifications are required. No decision will be made by DNP Members until these issues have been addressed and that this is not an officer decision.

The public were invited to comment and Dean Kinsella responded as follows:

1. *The application expired in 2024 according to the DNP website so why is it still valid?*

Although the extension of time is not presently in place the application is still live because it has not been refused or determined. There is a risk that the developer will appeal to the Planning Inspector for non-determination, but as yet this has not happened.

2. *How will HGVs access the site?*

DNP will look at the construction phase, but this rarely prevents development and there is usually a way to resolve this.

3. *Has the impact on Jordan Street residents been considered?*

Highways will look at how the developer will mitigate this and into the future regarding delivery, refuse collection, emergency vehicles etc.

4. *Jordan Street has no footpath and will be even busier.*

The construction phase is seen as only having a temporary impact.

5. *New houses will mean more traffic and more disturbance to existing residents.*
6. *There are numerous inaccuracies in the viability reports which are unacceptable and misleading including the use of a photo of Jordan Street which is actually Chapel Street and the inaccurate purchase price of the land.*
7. *Are officers and Members aware of the complexity of the site with frequent flooding events, underground springs and run-off?*
8. *The public have no assurances regarding the developers as there is no evidence of what they have previously built.*

The planning process is there to determine the use of land and whether to grant permission, it will not look at the history of the developer. Building regulations will oversee what is built and that it is compliant.

9. *Why after such a long period of time has this application returned?*

Although there was sufficient detail DNP failed to determine this application. Due to the elapse of time DNP need to be confident that all the facts are correct.

10. *Will there be a second round of consultation due to the lapse of time?*

DNP are unable to confirm this as new information is still pending.

11. *Question regarding the s106 agreement?*

Heads of terms include funds for education provision, a play area and affordable housing, but this will need to be reviewed.

12. *Who assesses the reports provided by experts?*

If a planning application is refused for eg. due to objections by the Highways Authority, the developer may seek an appeal. The planning inspector is the expert and may request for eg. that Highways provides an assessment of what mitigation is offered or is needed. The inspector will make the final determination and will also have regard to resident's comments too.

*13. The cost of labour and materials has increased considerably since the original submission of this application how will the developer cover losses unless they increase the number of market dwellings and reduce the number of affordable?*

House prices have also increased so one will offset the other.

*14. The 0.4 hectares ransom strip is not protected. In the original application the ratio of affordable to market was 50% this has now reduced to 25%. A hay meadow has been sacrificed for only 7 affordable dwellings some of which are flats, how is this justified? Why has the access road been changed from the garage site entrance to a cul de sac of existing properties unless more houses are planned for the future?*

DNP are unable to give assurances without further mitigation.

Residents raised further concerns regarding access and the impact on residents, the Camphill community and the additional burden on infrastructure such as the Medical Centre and lack of capacity at the nursery school

Devon Highways will assess the number of predicted journeys and s106 provision will be re-visited.

*15. Who will maintain the attenuation tank?*

Both the tank and landscaped areas will be maintained by a management company.

It was confirmed that DNP Members visited the site on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August, but most of the Members are already familiar with this area.

Cllr Phillips: Have all material considerations such as the steepness of the site and how it will overlook existing properties been considered? Why was this particular site selected and what was the criteria?

DNP undertook a call for sites. When landowners come forward with potential sites visibility and impact are both taken into consideration during the selection process. This is an allocated site in the Local Plan.

*16. How is housing need assessed?*

The Housing Needs Survey was referred to when determining the number of affordable houses and a new survey has recently been published. The Local Plan is for local need due to the National Park status, and this also applies to the application for 75 properties at Timbers Road.

Residents questioned if the 7 affordable dwellings would be for local people and are never affordable compared to the average income in the area.

Cllr Georgiades thanked both Dean Kinsella and the public for attending this meeting and accommodating the opportunity to ask questions.

**25/105. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to this meeting:**

Cllr Rogers confirmed that the Household Support Fund is open again and residents who are digitally excluded can complete applications which can be collected from the Clerk's office if required.

The new Housing Needs Survey has identified that some Home Choice applications have lapsed because these are time limited which applicants would be unaware of. Officers will address this, but demand far exceeds supply within the district.

Cllr Rogers is working with Devon Highways regarding speed checks/cameras along Plymouth Road and the potholes between Buckfast School and the Abbey are scheduled for repair in 2026.

Cllr Major advised that a new recycling trial is being discussed by TDC members and officers are looking at the poor state of the pétanque pitch and Football Club car park.

**25/106. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update:**

No further news.

**25/107. To review the Police Report for July 2025:**

Noted together with new statistical reports.

**25/108. English Devolution White Paper Update:**

No further updates.

**25/109. To receive the Teignbridge Citizens Advice Buckfastleigh Putreach Activity Report April to June 2024 and 'Next Steps for Buckfastleigh':**

Members confirmed their commitment to continue to fund £2,000 in the 2026/27 budget and that this amount will be reviewed too. They also agreed that if funding is available, it would be good to extend the current outreach service to include Ashburton and the Dartmoor communities with the suggestion to have 2 days in Buckfastleigh and 1 day in Ashburton.

**Action:** Clerk to contact Citizens Advice to this effect.

**25/110. To note the External Auditor's Report and Certificate for 2024/25:**

The Clerk advised that despite the additional work of managing the UKSPF monies, the audit went well and was completed ahead of schedule.

**25/111. Budget Analysis Report 01.07.25 – 31.07.25:**

Noted.

**25/112. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.07.25 – 31.07.25:**

Noted.

**25/113. Chairs Announcements.**

No matters to report.

**25/114. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting.**

Cllr Phillips reminded the meeting that the Valiant Soldier will be hosting a 60's evening on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2025 to celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closure of the original pub.

**25/115. Items requiring urgent attention.**

None

**25/116. Summary of Key Messages**

Clerk to action.

**25/117. Motion to move into a Part II (private) session to discuss items of confidential business in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.**

Meeting moved to Part II.

**Meeting returned to Part I and closed at 8.45pm**