

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held in the Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 13th April 2016 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillors: Pam Barrett (Deputy Chair), Ron Fox, Fanny Jackson, Janet Jones, Mark Maish, Linus McCloskey, Simon Rines, Andy Stokes and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

Press: No representatives of the Press in attendance

In attendance: Andrew Shadrake and Fuad Al-Tavil of the Devon Association of Renewable Energy (DARE), Georgina Allen, JoBee Timms of South Devon Wool Works (SDWW) and 5 members of the public.

Apologies: Councillors Dan Simpson, Neil Smith, Stuart Barker (District & County) and J. Nutley (District).

16/01. Introduction and welcome to the Annual Town Meeting:

Councillor Pam Barrett welcomed everyone to the meeting.

16/02. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 8th April 2015:

Signed and approved by Councillor Pam Barrett.

16/03. Report Town Council activities during the year and a look ahead to future plans by Councillor Pam Barrett:

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WED 13 APRIL 2016 A REVIEW OF THE YEAR AND LOOK FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

It's been quite a year of change at Buckfastleigh Town Council and we're very proud to be part of a democratically elected council working with the community to improve life in our town.

There's been so many things happen in the past year that it's hard to cover them all but highlights must include the noticeable increase in the number of people taking an interest and getting involved in helping shape our town.

The Town Council took an early decision to improve the way we communicate and encourage people to participate. We added extra time into the meeting agendas to allow people to ask questions and take part in the discussions, we use our web site and social media to let people know what is on the agenda and encourage them to come along, we've produced short summary agendas that highlight key issues and posted them around town and we've introduced key messages which tell people quickly about the decisions that have been made. So many people now come to Town Council meetings that we had to move the venue to this bigger room – some people now even come to our committee meetings! (Although we've not had any one brave enough to sit through the finance committee yet!)

Our Community Engagement events have been really helpful in identifying all those projects around town that need help and support to continue to flourish and we're making links between groups in our town - and further afield – to share ideas and work together to get things done.

A brief run through of the things that have happened with the help of the whole community:

Reintroduction of Lamb Pie Day and the new Christmas

Given over £4k in grants to support local groups.

Worked with Devon Wildlife Trust on Greater Horseshoe Bat project.

Production of the new town guide to bring in people to our town.

Started the process of building a helipad for the Devon Air Ambulance

Cycling Group to improve facilities for users, linking our towns with South Brent and Ashburton.

Neighbourhood Plan.

Projects on parking and dog mess.

Technology workshop – leading to gadget club at the library.

Working with Devon Association of Renewable Energy to create our own community energy group.

Flood defence improvements in town – work now underway and plans for improvement to the catchment area.

Separation of Town Hall Trust from Town Council – making funding clearer paving way for future improvements and use.

Royal British Legion re-established.

Victoria Park and pool now in community ownership – over £300k to improve it and All Hands to the Pump / Ice Gala bringing people in from all over the country.

All done in between 15 TC meetings and 24 Committee meeting.

A Look ahead

So much more to do. Plans for the coming year include:

Finalising the Neighbourhood Plan and taking it to a community referendum.

We've created a Community Development Fund to help community groups become more sustainable – and to find ways to support and fund community projects.

We want to identify way of improving the things our young people can access in town – create a youth council and maybe a young mayor?

Identify the things that matter in town and make sure they are protected – playing fields, community land, allotments, etc.

Improve our Town Hall and make it more available to the community.

Look at ways of encouraging local composting and see if we can develop a community garden and compost.

Create a lending “Library of Things” – to share items.

All these projects have taken a great deal of hard work and commitment from staff, councillors and volunteers.

I’d like to thank the town hall staff Judith Hart, Clair Stevens and Kiki Sykes for their hard work and support through a difficult year.

Thanks to the current and past town councillors for their dedication and thick skins!

Thanks to all the volunteers in the community who keep Buckfastleigh going!

16/04. Presentation by JoBee of South Devon Wool Works:

JoBee explained that SDWW is a social enterprise and a platform for sustainable wool working. The organisation can provide equipment for community use, share resources and has an element of celebration for an industry that can be very isolated and is seen as too labour intensive in the UK. JoBee is looking at setting up a permanent venue and Buckfastleigh is the obvious choice due to its wool heritage. The recent wool gathering event held at the Town Hall was very successful and attracted 500 visitors. SDWW are now looking at hosting an annual event in the town and finding permanent accommodation, but also need donations of equipment and support with marketing. The space must be big enough for large equipment and ideally have a rough floor with drainage such as a stable which can get messy due to the use of water and dyes.

Cllr Mark Maish: Suggestion to meet with Devonia.

Members agreed that spring is a good time to host an annual event and that this could include a sheep walk through the town. South Devon Wool Works could also have a stall at Lamb Pie Day in July.

16/05. Public Question Time:

Member of Public: *How far has the Neighbourhood Plan progressed and has it reached the referendum stage yet?*

Cllr Simon Rines: Funding for a master planning exercise and a strategic environment assessment has been applied for which has lengthened the process.

Meeting closed at 7.33pm.

Signed.....

Date.....