

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 9th November 2016 at 7.30 pm.

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

Press: No press in attendance

In attendance: 5 members of the public including 3 grant recipients who left after the presentation.

Part I (Open to the Public)

16/115. Apologies:

Councillors: Greg Porter, Dan Simpson, John Nutley (District) and Stuart Barker (County & District)

16/116. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None .

16/117. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 12th October 2016:

Signed and approved by Councillor Pam Barrett.

16/118. Questions raised by the Public:

Member of Public: Reiterated the *complaint regarding overgrown vegetation along Dart Bridge Road/Strode Road and that there is still no action from Devon County Council.*

Both Cllrs Janet Jones and Pamela Forbes have reported this to Devon Highways:

Action: Clerk to report again and request a response by 18 November 2016 providing a date as to when the work will take place.

The Clerk raised the issue of the new Teignbridge District Council (TDC) parking machines on behalf of a local resident. The Town Council had not been informed of this change, agreed that the instructions are not user friendly and there is concern over customer security, particularly as a statement had just been received regarding the theft of several machines across Devon, including Mardle Way car park.

Action: Clerk to write to TDC to raise the above issues and request written assurance that customer information which is entered cannot be misused by those with criminal intent.

16/119. Grants Presentation to local groups and organisations:

The Friendship Group and the Buckfastleigh Lamb Pie Day (Christmas Fair) each received £250.00 which was presented by Cllr Pam Barrett.

16/120. Police Report:

The Police Report for October was read out by the Chair

47 incidents for Buckfastleigh with 8 related to the A38 and 12 recorded crimes.

The need for the public to report anti-social behaviour to the police was highlighted in the report and that representatives of the police had attended a recent Pubwatch meeting facilitated by the Town Council. The public are encouraged to use 999 for incidents of anti-social behaviour or 101 if the incident has already happened. Anti-social behaviour can also be reported to TDC. A police surgery will be held in St. Luke's Church on 1 December at 10.30am.

16/121. Reports from County Councillor and District Councillors:

A report from Cllr J. Nutley was read out by Cllr Pam Barrett: -

- The Police Crime Commissioner attended the TDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting regarding making communities safer, especially for the most vulnerable.
- A presentation was given by the Clinical Commissioning Group concerning the proposed re-shaping of NHS community services.
- TDC are in the process of setting up a Housing Company as a joint venture with partners with the primary purpose of including the delivery of affordable and sub-market housing across Teignbridge. The Council will use its own land, capital and borrowing of up to £20 million to facilitate the delivery of up to 200 homes in the first four years of the company.

Members expressed concern as to why a company is being set up that is beyond the remit of the Freedom of Information Act for eg. why has this discussion taken place in a Part II session so withholding information from the public? What structure is being used, why is the information commercially sensitive when the land is owned by TDC and what form of company will be created? How does £20 million only deliver 200 homes?

Action: Clerk to write to the Leader of TDC, Cllr Jeremy Christophers and request clarification of the above information.

A report from Cllr Stuart Barker was read out by the Chair: -

- Devon County Council (DCC) are composing letters to the Secretary of State for Health requesting fairer funding to help support the retention of hospitals. DCC are also looking at transitional funding to support the creation of additional community services to reduce the number of admissions to hospitals for patients who prefer to receive support at home.
- The Stockabrook leat in Plymouth Road was cleared by the Community Payback team at the request of DCC who are pursuing other maintenance issues identified by residents.
- DCC have had an overspend of £5 million for funding of Adult Social Care, mainly due to personal care packages at home.

16/122. To receive the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 26th October 2016:

Noted.

To resolve the following recommendation from Minute No:
16/51. Review of subscriptions and licence payments.

Decision: Members agreed not to renew the subscriptions to the Devon Association of Local Councils and South West Councils for 2017/18. Proposed by Cllr Pam Barrett, seconded by Cllr Andy Stokes with all Members in agreement.

16/123. To receive the minutes of the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee held on 2nd November 2016:

Noted.

16/124. A38 Lower Dean to Dart Bridge Landscape Improvement Works:

The Clerk provided an update as to what work has been scheduled from 11 November until 20 December 2016. The contractor will remove non-native overgrown, top heavy and diseased trees and re-plant with native, slower growing species, such as yew and hawthorn, together with the use of hazel hurdles for visual screening. No acoustic screening will be included in this programme of works.

Cllr Neil Smith: The response from the contractor is comprehensive and helpful.

Cllr Pam Barrett: Suggestion to meet with the contractors to discuss further and any other concerns while they are working on site.

Action: Clerk to request a meeting between the Town Council and the contractor.

16/125. Pubwatch Meeting Update:

Cllr Simon Rines: The meeting was well represented by local licensees and the police. Anti-social behaviour in the town was discussed, how to tackle this problem and how to encourage the public to report incidents to the police.

It was agreed that the licensees with the support of the Council adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach and permanently ban those whose drunken behaviour impacts on staff and members of the public.

Actions from the meeting – Clerk to place a notice in the December edition of the Community News Sheet and send a letter to the head office of the local supermarket concerning the policy of preventing this store becoming a member of Pubwatch. The Council to produce a poster to promote zero tolerance and licensees to create a list of individuals who are banned and if identified committing an anti-social behaviour offence. Pubwatch will send a warning letter delivered by the police and will meet to identify who should be banned by taking a vote.

16/126. Response to South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group Community Consultation – Proposal to close Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Hospital:

Cllr Andy Stokes: A draft response to the consultation on behalf of the Council has been circulated to Members for approval and submission by 23 November 2016. The Town Council has already written to NHS England and issued a press release with the support of the Hospital League of Friends, strongly objecting to the proposed closure of the hospital. The request to postpone the consultation has unfortunately failed.

Cllr Pam Barrett: It has been agreed to link with North and East Devon communities along with Paignton to formulate a Devon-wide response. There has been good press and media exposure, but this has only been local and the campaign needs to focus its attention further afield.

Cllr Janet Jones: All questionnaires have now been collected and the responses will be collated by the League of Friends to forward to the Clinical Commissioning Group.

The Chair thanked all of those who have been involved in this campaign.

16/127. Child poverty in Buckfastleigh – what measures are in place and how can this be alleviated?

Cllr Pam Barrett: There are concerns about the levels of poverty and inequality in the town. Over one third of children in the Ashburton and Buckfastleigh ward have been classed as living in deprivation. What can the Town Council do and what plans do the County and District authorities have for eg. by providing welfare, youth services and activities to alleviate child poverty?

Cllr Janet Jones: Buckfastleigh used to have the services of Surestart due to the deprivation levels, but the statistics changed and this organisation now only provide a Monday crèche facility and playgroup on Thursdays. Surestart is funded by Action for Children via DCC funding from Central Government. Cutbacks have reduced this service including the number of children's centres. Fewer children and families are now being helped as they are working mostly with targeted families and this is no longer a universal service.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The pool has received a grant to run activities at the swimming pool, how much does TDC have for their leisure and recreation budget and how much of this is spent on Buckfastleigh? This also applies to the DCC youth service. It could be argued that Buckfastleigh has a higher need.

Cllr Janet Jones: The needs of Buckfastleigh are not being met and there are concerns about child protection issues. There is also the problem that by being included with Ashburton, the true figures are distorted.

Action: Cllr Barrett and the Clerk to invite representatives from both TDC and DCC to meet with the Town Council and discuss what proactive measures can be taken and how all three authorities can work together.

16/128. Aspirations for Buckfastleigh – to discuss community assets and buildings:

Cllr Pam Barrett: Proposal to create a community assets register. Members of the Council have visited the Masonic Hall and workshop, which is currently up for sale, to consider if there is any value in the site for the community? There is a shortage of facilities in the town such as child care, offices for small businesses, an information centre and there is a need for social housing. There are other Town Councils already actively engaged in this process and it could generate affordable housing with an income for the Council.

The Council is at the very early stages of exploring possible options for eg. buying the site, seeking planning permission, carrying out a community consultation and borrowing money to develop and regenerate.

Cllr Andy Stokes: It is suggested that the Council registers the Masonic Hall as a community asset whilst there are no offers on the property.

Cllrs Simon Rines, Janet Jones and the Clerk attended a community assets workshop presented by Teignbridge CVS which provided some useful information. It was noted that the playing fields can also be declared as a village green.

Action: A community assets working party to be created under the umbrella of the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee to create an asset list for Buckfastleigh with advice from Teignbridge CVS.

Cllr Pam Barrett to consult with the owner of the Masonic Hall and seek advice from the Real Ideas Organisation (RIO) who are based in Plymouth and can provide advice on this matter.

16/129. To discuss the June 2016 By-Election costs:

The Clerk had circulated a breakdown of the costs for the June by-election which were higher than expected and will now have a negative impact on the budget. The Council responded to the public outcry that polling cards were not issued for the December 2015 by-election and yet the issue of cards does not seem to have had a significant impact on what was again a low turnout.

The hire of two rooms with four members of staff, the travel and staff costs, how many postal votes and whether there is a profit element should be questioned.

Cllr Andy Stokes: There is a real concern that resignations by Councillors could generate bankruptcy.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The community needs to be informed and understand that the Precept will need to be increased to meet the cost of every by-election.

Action: Clerk to send a letter to TDC to question the costs. Members also agreed that the electorate should be made aware of the cost of democracy.

16/130. Chair's Announcements:

The Chair was pleased to report that although the annual Christmas lunch had been cancelled, Buckfast Abbey have now stepped in and have offered to fund all the food and drink and provide the venue. Volunteers are needed to help with providing transport, clearing up etc and a volunteer coordinator is required.

The Town Council has put in a bid to adopt the redundant telephone box at Dart Bridge Road for £1.00 and if successful, look at how the box could be used to benefit the community.

16/131. Clerk's Announcements: None

16/132. Correspondence: None

16/133. Reports from other meetings and working parties attended by Members:

Cllr Linus McCloskey: Pleased to report that the Citizens Advice Bureau will be returning to the Medical Centre with effect from Friday 25th November and will run a weekly drop-in session from 10.00am to 12.30pm.

Member of public: *Thanked Cllr McCloskey on behalf of the town for achieving this initiative.*

Cllr McCloskey thanked the Town Council for funding the project and the Medical Centre for providing the facility.

Cllr Janet Jones reported that she had attended civic services at Newton Abbot and Chudleigh and a dedication service for the new Royal British Legion standard for Buckfastleigh.

Cllrs Janet Jones and Simon Rines attended the Dartmoor National Park Local Plan Review consultation at the Parke. The document needs to be examined as the deadline for submission is 16 November, but DNPA will accept comments until after Christmas.

Cllr Pam Barrett: There is concern from the Environment Agency regarding run-off from the allocated housing site at Holne Road to the river Mardle, together with access and traffic restrictions to both the Holne Road and Barn Park sites. The Housing Needs Survey that was carried out is also not fit for purpose. Why is DNPA bringing in greenfield sites for development when there is already a brownfield site available? All Members need to read the plan. Where is there the provision for social housing? The needs of the town need to be evidence based.

Cllr Simon Rines: DNPA are due to meet with the Town Council concerning the Neighbourhood Plan so this will give an opportunity to discuss the Local Plan at the same time.

Cllr Andy Stokes: The community consultation event held in October was successful and feedback was generally supportive.

At the meeting of the South Dartmoor Cycle Group (SDCG) a new marked cycle route will be created between Ashburton and Buckfastleigh. The Dartmoor Classic cycle route will take place in July 2017. 'Bike Week' will also take place again in June 2017 and will link with events in Ashburton and South Brent.

Cllr Pam Barrett: Victoria Park is now in partnership with SDCG and are looking for volunteers to help with this event. For every four volunteers that can help for four hours, £250.00 will be donated to Victoria Park.

Cllr Simon Rines: Pleased to report that a new cinema club has been set up in the Town Hall as a response to public demand with the first two films being screened on Saturday 17 December.

16/134. Urgent Items: None

The meeting closed at 9.53 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....