

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 11th January 2017 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, Greg Porter, Dan Simpson, Andy Stokes and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

Press: No press in attendance

In attendance: 22 members of the public

Part I (Open to the Public)

17/151. Apologies:

Councillor: Stuart Barker (County & District)
PCSO James Yates (Ashburton Police Station)

17/152. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None .

17/153. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 14th December 2016:

Signed and approved by Councillor Pam Barrett.

The Chair moved the meeting to Agenda Item No. 3) Reports from the Police, County and District Councillors:

17/154. Police Report:

The Police Report for December was read out by the Chair:-

40 incidents for Buckfastleigh with 5 related to the A38 and 11 recorded crimes.

Reports of anti-social behaviour decreased with very few incidents over the Christmas and New Year period.

A drugs warrant issued early in December on a property in Station Road resulted in a find of £5,000 to £10,000 worth of amphetamine. The male arrested from the property has been released on bail until 17th February 2017.

There have been reports of males using head torches to look into vehicles in the Barn Park area and there have been incidents of criminal damage to the Fore Street allotments.

A new Sargent has been appointed at Ashburton Police Station – Steve Cayless who will be out and about soon.

17/155. Reports from County Councillor and District Councillors:

Report from Cllr Stuart Barker: -

- Re-surfacing works to Bossell Road were carried out before Christmas, but due to several repairs, a top coat to the upper section will now take place after April 2017 when new funding is available.
- Additional grant funding for adult care services have been created by reducing the New Homes Bonus to the District Councils. This budget will now be increased by over 9% to £206 million.
- The report by Healthwatch Torbay who are overseeing the consultation about local hospital beds, has now been published and is available on their website and the South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group website.

17/156. Questions raised by the Public:

Member of the Public: *Thanked the trustees and volunteers for their work at the swimming pool and Victoria Park, but raised the cost of the construction of the new adventure play park and how this will impact public liability costs?*

Cllr Pam Barrett: The new equipment was grant funded. This will increase the cost of public liability insurance, but the provision of extra facilities may encourage more use of the pool and make the area a destination.

Several members of the public made the following comments about the swimming pool:-

“It brings people into the town who then use other facilities, cafes and shops.”

“One to one swimming lessons are available for children and adults, aqua fit, sub-aqua classes and SPLASH, there are lots of activities and I am looking forward to the 2017 opening.”

“There is a growing interest for cold water swimming in the UK eg. Devon Wild Swimmers.”

“£20,000 is needed to help fund the pool and keep employment in the town.”

“The pool attracted me to move to the town and use other tourist attractions.”

“The pool employs many local people and provides excellent opportunities for volunteers.”

It was clarified that the Town Council is not taking over the responsibility of running the swimming pool or closing it, as implied in some media reports, but the decision taken at this meeting by the Council will be whether to help fund it.

The Chair clarified the funding arrangements. The Finance Committee recommended that £10,000 from the Community Development Fund is needed to bridge the funding gap for 2016/17 and £20,000 for 2017/18. The park has been very successful in accessing grants to pay for capital improvements and building work but finding grants to cover running costs like wages and utility bills is very difficult.

Cllr Neil Smith: It should be noted that the Victoria Park charity is unable to use all the charities assets to raise income because the Teignbridge District Council entered into an exclusive and low rent agreement with the Bungalow Youth Project. The Bungalow cannot be used for any other purpose so it does not generate any significant income and is empty and unused for the majority of the time.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The park trustees have been approached by other potential users of the Bungalow who would be willing to pay to use the space during the daytime, generating as much as £10,000 per

annum and leaving the evenings free for the Bungalow Youth Project. However, it has not been possible to progress this as an available funding opportunity with the Bungalow Trustees.

Member of the Public: *What financial plans has Victoria Park made to fill the gap before public funds are used?*

Cllr Pam Barrett: By creating a destination and marketing the facility there will be greater usage of the pool. During the last season, there were 8,500 visitors to the pool which generated £22,000 in income. The volunteers are fund-raising all the time and from a wide range of activities. Most pools require local authority subsidy to survive and Buckfastleigh residents are still contributing to Teignbridge District Council leisure facilities through their Council Tax contribution and yet little of this is spent in Buckfastleigh.

There is an outdoor swimming revival and a huge capacity to bring in grants. We have just employed a fund-raiser to help with this.

We are also looking at energy saving initiatives, but the trustees and volunteers are committed to maintaining high standards such as water testing and DBS checks beyond the minimum standards required.

Cllr Barrett explained the Community Development Fund and Teignbridge Elector Fund process and said that without immediate funding to meet the pools running costs it would be necessary to start the process of closing it.

Cllr Neil Smith: The Town Council has for many years subsidised the Town Hall as the trustee at approximately £20,000 per year. The Council does not wish to have to choose between the Town Hall and the pool.

Cllr Andy Stokes: The Town Hall is a community resource too.

Cllr Pam Barrett: A community space audit is being carried out and capital grants are available for the Town Hall.

17/157. To receive the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 8th December 2016:

Noted.

To resolve the following recommendation from Minute No: 16/69. To consider and recommend applications for the Community Development Fund and Teignbridge Elector Fund.

1. Dart Rock – Buckfastleigh Functional Fitness Trail – It was recommended that further information and costs are required before this imaginative project can progress.
2. William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust (WPCST) – Electrical upgrade for on-site residential accommodation – Agreed to recommend application to the Elector Fund for £1,000
3. Buckfastleigh Primary School – Playground Enrichment Project – Agreed to recommend to the Elector Fund for £1,084 and suggest match funding.
4. The Orchard Millennium Green Trust (OMG) – Renewal of perimeter fence and repairs to the tea hut – Recommendation to support the Green , but reject this application due to existing reserves held by the Trust.
5. The Buckfastleigh Citizens Advice Outreach Service (CAB) – To recommend to the Elector Fund for £1,000

6. Victoria Park and Swimming Pool – Recommendation to award £10,000 from the Community Development Fund.

The Chair called a vote and all recommendations were unanimously resolved by Members. Representatives of the OMG challenged the decision of the Council not to fund their application and reference was made to the lack of community consultation regarding the proposed performance canopy on the Green which has received some negative feedback.

Action: It was agreed that members of the OMG should meet with the Council to explore the issues.

Clerk to apply to the Elector Fund on behalf of the WPCST, Buckfastleigh Primary School and the CAB.

17/158. To receive the minutes of the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee held on 4th January 2017:

Noted.

17/159. To discuss and resolve the Budget and Precept for 2017/18:

The Chair referred to the Budget Options Paper 2017/18 which was circulated to Members and the public present at the meeting. Public consultation events have been carried out and as a result eight projects that are deliverable in 2017/18 have been brought forward:-

Free youth activity programme – can meet a range of needs or employ a fund-raiser. Activities could be seed funded with match funding or ten small scale activities could take place.

Town Ranger - this would be a member of staff managed by the Town Clerk to carry out a wide variety of small highway jobs such as a Road/Snow/Flood Warden service and help to organise volunteers.

Citizens Advice Bureau Outreach Service – a new service manned by a volunteer has recently started at the Medical Centre, but funds are needed for a laptop, administrative costs and supervisor assistance. There is evidence of need for this service and the nearest CAB office is in Newton Abbot.

Victoria Park and swimming pool – the demand for this facility was covered under the Public Session earlier in the meeting.

Air Ambulance Helipad - Devon Air Ambulance have already researched, surveyed and identified the football pitch as a suitable site in Buckfastleigh, but new LED floodlights are required. The Council will need to work with the Football Club as to how the site and lights are managed.

Cllr Andy Stokes: With the proposed hospital closures, it is essential to have a helipad and reminded the meeting of the demonstration planned in Ashburton on Saturday 21st January 2017.

Community solar panel installation – the Council has secured free solar panels for use on community buildings, but now needs funding for the installation costs.

Community Development Fund – the recent number of applications for this fund has demonstrated a need for this to continue to be available.

Buckfastleigh Town Hall – a business plan is being worked on together with the examination and implementation of cost efficiencies. An energy audit has been carried out for the Town Hall in partnership with the Devon Association of Renewable Energy.

Member of the Public: *Are contingencies factored in and will there be a project manager for each?*

The basic Precept was explained which includes a grant to the Town Hall and how the budget needs to be increased to fund new projects. Residents who receive the Council Tax reduction scheme will not be effected by any increase to the Council Tax.

There will be further massive public spending cuts such as public transport and schools and Teignbridge District Council must fund a £70 million pension gap which will be met from the Council Tax.

It was agreed that there is public support for the proposed projects following feedback from the consultation events and these projects could be delivered in 2017/18.

Cllr Neil Smith: There is concern that Central Government is controlling local expenditure and that caps to Council Tax levies may affect the Town and Parish Councils in the future which will decimate public services.

Cllr Simon Rines: The money from the solar panels and helipad can be transferred to other projects in the following financial year.

Cllr Mark Maish: Most of the District Council's money does not directly benefit the residents of Buckfastleigh.

Action: The Chair called for a vote on the 2017/18 budget and precept with a motion to fund the 8 projects outlined above and meet the current budget expenditure by raising the precept to £128,111.00. Proposed by Cllr Andy Stokes and seconded by Cllr Janet Jones with all Members in agreement. Motion resolved.

17/160. Chair's Announcements: None

17/161. Clerk's Announcements: None

17/162. Correspondence: None

17/163. Reports from other meetings and working parties attended by Members:

Deferred to the February Town Council Meeting.

17/164. Urgent Items: None

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....