

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 13th September 2017 at 7:30pm

Present: Pam Barrett (Chair), Janet Jones, Pamela Forbes, Ron Fox, Mark Maish, Linus McCloskey, Greg Porter, Dan Simpson, Neil Smith, Andy Stokes and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

Press: No press in attendance.

In attendance: Cllr Stuart Barker (County & District), Ella Briens (Dartmoor National Park Ranger) and 3 members of the public.

Part I (Open to the Public)

17/89. Apologies: Councillors Fanny Jackson and Simon Rines and John Nutley (District).

17/90. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

17/91. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12th July 2017:

Signed and approved by Cllr. Pam Barrett

17/92. Questions raised by the Public:

Member of the Public: *There are saplings growing in the gullies along Strode Road and Dart Bridge Road.*

Action: Clerk to ask the Town Ranger to report to Devon Highways.

Member of the Public: *Overgrown hedges along Wallaford Road and Tor View are causing a nuisance to pedestrians.*

It was noted that only Devon County Council (DCC) has the authority to contact landowners to cut back hedges and this can be a lengthy process. The reporting system was explained and residents are encouraged to report highways matters online. It was noted that the Town Ranger will continue to report problems, but he does not have a 'hotline' to Highways and is treated no differently to a resident.

Ella Briens: It has been useful to meet with the new Town Ranger who will be enrolled as a DNPA footpath volunteer when he has undertaken maintenance training.

Residents can keep up to date with the National Park using social media. The daily work of the Park Ranger includes dealing with dogs, livestock, camping and litter. Funding pots have now been made available to the DNPA to enable work to footpaths and bridleways which are not only overgrown, but also have foundation and drainage issues.

Approval has been given to allow West Buckfastleigh Parish Council to engrave the side of the new boundary stone which is adjacent to their parish.

17/93. Police report:

The report for July had been circulated to Members prior to this meeting which was noted. There was no report for August due to policing cover issues.

There has been an increase in anti-social behaviour including neighbour disputes which has necessitated the intervention of the District Council, Housing Associations and police.

Speed checks have been carried out along Buckfast Road and Higher Mill Lane following complaints from residents in Buckfast.

The public are encouraged to make a note of car registration numbers to nuisance vehicles and report to the police following incidents in the Station Road car park.

17/94. Reports from County Councillor and District Councillors and to discuss the effectiveness of updates and how this could be improved:

Report from Cllr Stuart Barker:-

Around 14,200 Devon residents were estimated to suffer from dementia in 2016 which is nearly 2% of the population of the county. This figure is set to rise to around 24,200 by 2036 affecting nearly 3% of the population. Information about support services for people with dementia can be found at www.pinpointdevon.co.uk

Airband is now providing access to faster broadband to areas of Buckfastleigh that are not being provided through the BT coverage such as Colston Road.

Community Payback teams have been clearing some areas of vegetation that has been obstructing pavements including the footpath at the top of Higher Mill Lane which is significantly overgrown. The new traffic order for Plymouth Road to the right of the entrance to the swimming pool is still under discussion regarding the area of visual splay.

Works to change the surface of the crossing area at the top of Fore Street have now been agreed and have been put into the forward capital programme.

Members highlighted the problem of delivery lorries using the disabled bay and mounting the pavement. There is not enough space for a bollard, but delivery companies could be requested to unload using cages and trolleys without bringing their vehicles into Fore Street. Cllr Barker agreed to pursue this.

17/95. To receive the minutes of the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee held on 6th September 2017: Noted.

To resolve the following recommendation from Minute No 17/77: Preliminary review of car parks within the Parish.

Proposal to commission a piece of internal research and report back to this committee in 2018.

Action: Proposed by Cllr Andy Stokes and seconded by Cllr Neil Smith that the Clerk undertakes this work.

17/96. Planning Application for discussion by full Council: 0402/17 Proposed: Demolition of store and erection of new trimming building at Devonia Sheepskins & Tannery Ltd, Mardle Way, Buckfastleigh:

A draft response to this application had been circulated to Members by Cllr Stokes for comment. It was agreed that although the Council supports the improvement of the site infrastructure and the provision of more employment, it does not support piecemeal development. The Town Council recognises that the existing building is not fit for purpose, but would like to see the enhancement of the historical value of the site as part of a DNPA led masterplan which includes the involvement of the Council.

Action: Amended letter to be forwarded to the Clerk to send to the planning authority.

17/97. Planning Application for discussion by full Council: 17/02016/FUL Proposed: Installation of ground mounted solar array (112 panels) (estimated output 30 kilowatt) and retention of air source heat pump at Bigadon Farm, Buckfastleigh:

Recommendation: No objection to this proposed development.

17/97. Town Council Projects update:

- Community solar panels – following discussion at the September Planning, Environment and Transport Committee, it was agreed that if the grant application submitted by Cllr Andy Stokes for additional funding is unsuccessful the preferred option for the installation of the solar panels would be the swimming pool which has a higher energy consumption than the Town Hall.
- Helipad – Dartmoor National Park Authority have confirmed that planning permission is not required to change the lumens to LED bulbs on the existing floodlight poles at the football ground. This work can now be commissioned and Cllr Pam Barrett and the Clerk will be meeting with the Devon Air Ambulance Community Landing Sites Development Officer and the Chair of Buckfastleigh Rangers Football Club to discuss further. It was confirmed that the responsibility for the repair, maintenance and testing of the new lights will lie with the Football Club and not the Town Council.
- Free activities for young people – information from the summer programme of activities will be collated, but it was noted that around 390 children attended the 23 sessions run over 5½ weeks. The Chair and Clerk will be meeting with the event’s organiser to examine feedback and discuss plans for 2018.
- CAB outreach service – Cllr Linus McCloskey reported that the outreach service following the summer holiday break is back to providing a weekly service at the Medical Centre.
- Town Ranger – Matt McLeod has been in post for almost three months and the Clerk continues to receive positive feedback from the community. Matt is currently liaising with other statutory authorities to establish communication and reporting links regarding maintenance and repairs around the parish.

17/98. To discuss the planning, management and communications issues for projects which are within the remit of this committee:

Cllr Greg Porter was asked to compose a short summary of Town Council news to circulate to residents via social media.

17/99. To discuss the level of policing in Buckfastleigh:

There is concern from residents and the Town Council regarding the increasing level of anti-social behaviour in the town and the current lack of Police cover.

What is the level of policing required for a community of this size?

Cllr Stuart Barker: The Chief Constable for Devon and Cornwall Police decides how each community is policed and the original plan had been to reduce the number of PCSOs and increase the number of warrant officers, but how officers are deployed is a different matter.

Decision: Members agreed that clarification regarding the level of policing is needed and requested that a letter is sent by the Clerk to the Chief Constable to this effect expressing the concerns of the Town Council.

It was also suggested that the community may ask the Town Council to explore the costs of a new CCTV system for the town centre, but it should be noted that this is not a simple project and would incur significant costs.

17/100. Proposal to fund a community training programme:

Buckfastleigh is fortunate to have numerous voluntary groups, but many are struggling to obtain funding and to achieve this they must be able to demonstrate sound governance and community support. The Town Council is exploring ways of delivering much needed services in the community and would like to support our voluntary groups to help deliver projects in the parish.

The funding workshop for volunteers held in July encouraged communication between the groups who attended and it was proposed that further workshops could be facilitated to help develop skills and useful connections with other organisations. The Town Council could facilitate six monthly sessions commencing in October at a cost of £175.00 each which would be supported by Teignbridge CVS at no extra charge. A small charge for non-residents could also be considered.

It was agreed that voluntary groups and organisations who seek funding from the Town Council should be encouraged to attend these workshops and to apply for match funding.

Decision: Cllr Andy Stokes proposed six training workshops funded from the Community Development Fund at a total cost of £1,050 which was seconded by Cllr Pam Barrett with all Members in agreement.

17/101. Initial discussion re the 2018/19 edition of the Town Guide:

Action: Members agreed that the Clerk should discuss further with Cllr Simon Rines and seek preliminary legal advice concerning the contract with the Town Guide publisher. The Council wishes to challenge the terms of contract and it was agreed that a letter is sent to this effect. Matter to be discussed further at the October Tourism Committee.

17/102. Proposal to commission a review of the Town Council meeting structure and frequency:

Cllr Pam Barrett explained that it is difficult for the Town Council to host community engagement events and meetings due to the frequency of Council meetings. The current regime does not provide enough time to develop proposals.

It was agreed that there is a need for a monthly planning meeting, but there could possibly be fewer Finance Committees. Any space created could be used effectively by working parties who could meet to develop specific projects that once formulated would then be considered by full Council.

A member of the public expressed concern that working parties may be given devolved powers, but it was confirmed by the Chair that this would not be the case and all decisions would still be required to be ratified by full Council.

Action: It was agreed that Cllr Pam Barrett and the Clerk would explore this proposal further and circulate suggestions with a view to discussion at the November Town Council meeting.

17/103. Chair's Announcements: None

17/104. Clerk's Announcements:

The Clerk has received a request from Buckfast Resident's Society for the community use of the telephone box now adopted by the Town Council at Grange Green.

Action: Clerk to suggest that the Society submits or presents a proposal to the Council.

17/105. Correspondence: None

17/106. Reports from other meetings and working parties attended by Members:

Cllr Andy Stokes reported that the Burrington Estates Holne Road exhibition held in the Town Hall on Thursday 7th September did not provide any specific information with no master plan or design brief for the site and nationally produced statistics that were not applicable to the consultation. A vague resident's questionnaire was used and questions regarding water management, highways issues etc were not addressed.

Cllr Janet Jones had attended the Commonwealth flag raising ceremony at Forde House, a Buckfast Village Hall management committee meeting and League of Friends Hospital meeting where she raised the question of the distribution of funds between Ashburton and Buckfastleigh again. It was noted that Buckfastleigh W.I has paid for the community defibrillator and are now making the arrangements for installation.

Cllr Pamela Forbes attended a South Devon and Torbay Community Grants Fund session. The fund is available to assist small community-led schemes to improve health and well-being and is available to any person, group or project based in South Devon and Torbay.

Cllr Pam Barrett and the Clerk were pleased to be invited to the William Pengelly Caves Studies Trust re-opening ceremony for the Higher Kiln Quarry Caves.

17/107. Urgent Items: None.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

Signed Date.....