

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in the Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 10th February 2016 at 7.30 pm.

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

Press: No representatives of the Press

6 members of the public

In attendance: Cllrs Stuart Barker (County), Charlie Dennis and John Nutley (District), Toby Russell, Community Helipads Development Officer and Suzy Williamson, Teignbridge CVS - Buckfastleigh Community Care

Part I. (Open to the Public)

The Deputy Chair, Cllr Pam Barrett invited questions from the public.

16/195. Questions raised by the Public:

Member of Public: *Has there been any progress regarding one insurance policy that can be used by community groups?*

Cllr Pam Barrett: This is still being researched, but suggest that the organisation sends in their renewal quote.

A written statement was read out to the meeting by a member of the public - Tom Trueman - regarding the relationship between the Town Council, Buckfastleigh Community Forum and the quarry operator. The statement included the allegation of "harassment and inciting public unrest" and referred to the noise leaflet distributed to households, posts on social media and an allegation against Cllr Rines. It proposed that The Council concentrate on other matters effecting the town such as parking, roads and attracting tourism.

Cllr Pam Barrett thanked Mr. Trueman for the statement and explained that the Council is unable to address every question presented under the agenda of this meeting, but would respond as follows:-

The leaflet was agreed by full Council following discussion. Noise is a serious issue and the Council are using the proper channels to address this, but there has been some confusion between the responsibilities of Devon County Council (DCC) and Teignbridge District Council (TDC) which have only recently been resolved. TDC deal with statutory noise nuisance complaints from local residents and the Town Council is in correspondence with DCC. The Council is also taking advice concerning sound monitoring and technical information. This is not a campaign against the quarry operator, but a planning issue with conditions that need to be monitored.

Member of the Public: *Has the Council spoken to the quarry operator?*

Cllr Pam Barrett: The Council is represented on the Whitecleave Quarry Liaison Group and takes issues to this group on behalf of the community.

Councillors who were involved with Buckfastleigh Community Forum made that clear at the time of the election.

The Council are discussing parking, roads, the Plymouth Road bus shelter and other topics; but would welcome more contributions from the public. We would encourage people to report pot-holes and other highways issues through the DCC website. Local residents are invited to give ideas around the ongoing parking problems.

Cllr Simon Rines: A new Town Guide to attract visitors is being produced by the Council and just because something is not in the public domain, it does not mean that it is not being worked on.

Member of the Public: *Why are agendas and minutes not emailed to the public?*

Cllr Pam Barrett: The Council does not yet have an email subscription service for the public, but it is something that is being looked into. Notice boards, the Council website and social media are used to publicise the agenda, summary agenda and minutes for Town Council meetings.

Cllr Andy Stokes: The Council are negotiating with the Co-op regarding use of their screen to publicise meetings and events.

16/196. Presentation by Toby Russell, Community Helipads Development Officer:

Devon Air Ambulance are moving to increase the hours of operation into darkness as the present shut down for this service is at 5.30pm. It is intended to increase this to midnight by the end of the year following support for a night time service through campaigning.

A network of community helipads is being developed through community funded sites which must be floodlit, pre-surveyed and level such as a car park or football pitch. The pilot carries out a risk assessment of how to access the site and looks at potential hazards such as power lines. The site must be well lit for safety and the transition process for the patient.

A preferred supplier is used and lighting is switched on remotely so no local volunteers are required. A system has been developed that can be fully remote using solar panels and a 10m pole. This would be a community funded asset as available resources have to go to the helicopter, crew and equipment.

Sites would need to be identified and then surveyed. Data can be provided to support applications and bids by the community. Pilots however, have the final approval and aerial photos are required so the survey can take up to two months.

Cllr Janet Jones: The floodlit football pitch has been used on several occasions already.

Toby Russell: All potential sites need to be considered and more than one may be required.

Cllr Pam Barrett: This initiative has already been identified under the Neighbourhood Plan as it is difficult to travel to A&E from Buckfastleigh.

Toby Russell: The scheme is part of a resilience programme. A 50m x 50m site is required near to the main centre of population. It costs £1,000 to £1,500 for equipment and £10,000 for a fully remote site. Local skills could be utilised to reduce costs, but the first objective is to create a list of potential sites.

Action: Councillor volunteers to provide a list of sites.

16/197. Update by Suzy Williamson of Teignbridge CVS – Buckfastleigh Community Care:

This new group is working with Sharing Buckfastleigh and the Medical Centre as a patient support organisation to the elderly and isolated.

There has been a 72% increase in the number of 75 year-olds and over in the area. This is an increasing strain on services. Teignbridge CVS will continue to support Sharing, but have set up a sister organisation to help with medical issues and preventative measures that encourage well-being and good health.

Bovey Community Care has been created to develop a new service and will now expand to include the Moorland area, setting up organisations in Buckfastleigh and Ashburton. Suzy has been asked to find new trustees to support this initiative. It would however, be useful to have relevant experience such as a social services, IT or finance background. The CVS are looking to create a small advisory group in the area and this service includes pastoral care from the Church. It is hoped that the group can organise mini bus trips to places of interest such as Dartmoor.

Cllr Pam Barrett offered the use of Town Council communication channels to help with the advertising for new trustees.

Suzy Williamson: At present we are looking for recruitment and scope for funding.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The council grant process is available. The new library monthly gadget club could work with Buckfastleigh Community Care who could assist with arranging access and transport.

16/198. Police Report:

In the absence of a representative from the Police, Cllr Barrett summarised the January report.

49 incidents had been recorded with 8 relating to the A38 and 21 crimes.

There has been a rise in anti-social behaviour including a spate of thefts from motor vehicles.

There has been an incident involving a bogus police officer pulling over a vehicle using flashing headlights which appears to be an attempt to steal a vehicle. A reminder that motorists should only stop for marked police cars displaying flashing blue lights.

16/199. Reports from County Councillor and District Councillors:

Cllr Stuart Barker reiterated that planning complaints must go to DCC and statutory noise nuisance complaints to TDC.

Cllr Pam Barrett has had a meeting with TDC to define what actually constitutes a noise nuisance in law.

Cllr Stuart Barker: There must be an evidence base to issue a Stop Notice as this is a very complex issue.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The Council is awaiting a response for an urgent meeting with DCC as requested in the letter to Dr P. Norrey.

Cllr Stuart Barker: The Council will not receive an answer from Dr Norrey as the planning officer, Mike Deaton will be investigating the information contained in the correspondence.

Devon County Council are dealing with the parking issue in Jordan Street. It is viewed that using yellow lines are not effective and cars are parking too close at the Barn Park end of the road. When parking is removed from one area a displacement issue is created.

Cllr Janet Jones: The parking in this area is hazardous for other vehicles.

Cllr Stuart Barker: Residents can park on single yellow lines in the evening on Station Road.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The classification of the parking bay at Station Road needs to be looked at.

The Environment Agency (EA) - has access issues for essential flood improvements to Central Court which will be carried out shortly. 8 parking spaces in Station Road car park will be required by the EA for a site office and staff parking. Can temporary parking permits be arranged to alleviate this?

Cllr Stuart Barker: There has been the suggestion to use the access ramp at the Orchard Millennium Green which is already for use by the EA.

The Variation of Condition 10 planning application is now available for comment. The Visual Impact Assessment has been carried out which was delayed until there were no leaves on the trees.

The Tour of Britain cycle race is returning to Devon for 2016, but the route is not known as yet.

Devon County Council lobbied Government concerning the injustice of under-funding rural areas. A further £5 million was awarded as a result of this and a 6% increase for social care funding.

Cllr Pam Barrett: People are unaware about the process of Devolution can you clarify what is happening?

Cllr Stuart Barker: The door has only just been opened for discussion so there is no further detail available at present. The Teignbridge Association of Local Councils (TALC) is the mostly likely host for information.

A new Neighbourhood Planning Officer has been employed to provide support for towns and parishes who have Neighbourhood Plans and will visit the Town Council for discussion in due course.

The TDC budget has been increased by 3.3% to meet costs and it has been agreed to accommodate six Syrian families in urban areas of the district and in houses to facilitate independence and a support network.

Cllr John Nutley: A Neighbourhood Watch presentation at the recent TALC meeting promoted a new DNA forensic marking kit which can be used to mark up to 50 personal and household items for £20.00 such as laptops and cameras.

Cllr Charlie Dennis: A new 10 year plan for Teignbridge which will replace the current plan will be examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee before going to full Council for approval on 4 April 2016.

16/200. Apologies:

Councillors: Billy Hartstein, Linus McCloskey, Dan Simpson and Graham Squires

16/201. Councillors invited to declare any interests: Cllr Mark Maish re Agenda Item No. 9) Minute No. 16/78 Grant Applications – Friends of Buckfastleigh Primary School.

16/202. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 13th January 2016:

Signed and approved by Councillor Pam Barrett with one amendment to Minute No. 16/179 regarding the source of grant funding for the War Memorial.

16/203. To receive the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 27th January 2016.

Noted with 1 typo amendment.

To resolve the following recommendations from Minutes Nos:

16/78. Grant applications:-

Friends of Buckfastleigh School - £250.00

Jellyfish Productions - £250.00

Both resolved

16/80. Items requiring Urgent Attention: Recommendation to appoint Cllrs Pam Barrett, Neil Smith and Andy Stokes as Town Council account signatories. Resolved.

16/81. Precept 2016/17

Statement on behalf of the Council was read out by Cllr Andy Stokes:-

This Council is deeply committed to the local community and determined to preserve and develop the resources we have within our community as much as we can in the face of on-going, swingeing cuts to all our public services from every other tier of government at National, County and District level. These have been particularly felt locally in the effects on our youth provision, children's services, the library service, mental health support services and more.

To this end, we are planning to introduce a new Community Development Fund, that we can use to generate further funds to seed new community led projects as well as ones that are already up and running. We would also like to continue to increase the funding available for direct grants to local organisations that do valuable work in the community. For the new financial year in April, we are also planning to separate the Town Hall from the Council to satisfy legal requirements and make it more available for community use, more self-supporting and able to generate more income, whilst at the same time remaining committed to preserving and supporting it as a community asset.

To fund these, we propose to increase the Band D precept from the current £53.12 per year to £65.00 per year, taking it a little over the £61.90 it was in 2014. This will mean the approximate average precept for those properties in Buckfastleigh that pay Council Tax will become £50.55, an increase of £9.21 per year (or less than 18p per week).

Cllr Pam Barrett: This a minimum budget to enable the Town Council to start to deliver on projects. Until now the Council Tax has subsidised the Town Hall. A business plan is now required. The Town Hall is a great asset, but expensive. Public consultation is required to see how local residents could improve use of the building.

Decision: The budget for 2016/17 was proposed by Cllr Neil Smith and seconded by Cllr Simon Rines, with all Members in agreement.

16/204. Bats and Light Pollution Report 2014:

Cllr Mark Maish: Bats and wildlife are being looked at within the town. A paper written by Bristol University on the Greater Horseshoe Bats reports that this species are very light sensitive in every aspect of their life. New LED street lighting which is being installed by DCC needs to be a warm white and DCC need to be aware of this.

A walk was carried out around Buckfastleigh to look at better land management to encourage foraging routes and sites for the bats. Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) funding is available for mapping these routes, but there needs to be a joined up approach by all the local authorities and organisations involved.

The Council is keen to set up a community group to promote bat welfare and develop a management plan for the town to encourage bat protection eg. by creating bat-friendly gardens.

Action: Cllr Mark Maish to consult Devon Highways regarding street lighting.

Free DWT bat detectors will be available for loan from the swimming pool during the summer and a mobile bat detector will also be coming to Buckfastleigh soon.

16/205. To review the provision of Parish Dog Waste Bins:

Cllr Mark Maish is liaising with TDC and highlighting potential locations for further dog waste bins around the parish. The TDC officer will visit Buckfastleigh and an educational campaign will be undertaken. The District Council have agreed to install some additional bins.

Cllr Charlie Dennis: Attaching bins to existing poles reduces the cost of installation.

There was the suggestion for a map of where bins are located on the website.

Cllr Simon Rines: A high profile campaign is needed to deter offenders. Bags are available at the newsagent and Co-op. The behaviour by some dog owners is anti-social and can lead to health problems.

It was suggested that people need to be made aware that they can use their own landfill bin to dispose of dog waste.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The campaign could involve local children creating posters and dog owners self-policing.

Cllr Charlie Dennis: Bags of discarded waste do not degrade. Social media can be used to promote 'Dog Watch' and harmless vegetable dye based signs can be used for pavements.

Action: Cllrs Maish and Rines to work on this project.

16/206. Proposal that all significant commercial, communal or sensitive planning applications are brought to the attention of Full Council for discussion:

It was agreed that significant applications are brought to full Council and that the Clerk liaises with the Highways and Planning Chair and Council Chair to this effect. Applications may be looked at under the planning committee, full Council or at an extraordinary meeting depending on the deadline date for submission of comments.

Decision: Proposed by Cllr Pam Barrett, seconded by Cllr Mark Maish with all Members in agreement.

16/207. Chairman's Announcements:

Cllr Barrett advised Members that a Part II session to discuss a personnel matter will be required at the end of this meeting.

A committee structure and communications review meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 March at 8.00pm with an external facilitator to assist. The purpose of this meeting will be to look at an enabling a vision for Buckfastleigh Council. What is our purpose, what do we want to achieve and what are our structures? To provide a strategic overview for eg. the next precept discussion needs to involve the community and that this process should commence in June.

16/208. Clerk's Announcements:

No announcements.

16/209. Correspondence:

None

16/210. Reports from other meetings and working parties attended by Members:

Cllr Simon Rines gave an update regarding progress with the new Town Guide.

Cllr Pam Barrett: Could this be done in-house in the future as a revenue generator?

Cllrs Andy Stokes and Ron Fox attended the Orchard Millennium Green (OMG) AGM and highlighted community objections and questions about the planning process regarding the new canopy which is to be erected as an entertainment space. The OMG feel that they have covered the issues and done enough consultation.

Cllr Janet Jones and Andy Stokes reported from the DNPA Naturally Healthy Project which provides funding for outdoor pursuits and connecting with outdoor projects. This gave the opportunity for networking with other organisations to coordinate volunteers.

There are now lots of food and growing projects around the town.

Cllr Mark Maish: Buckfastleigh could have a food festival.

Cllr Janet Jones: The children's centre and primary schools should be encouraged to use the Wildspace garden more.

The library is looking at organising some social activities and are exploring projects which can be facilitated in the library and other venues.

Meeting went in to Part II (Private) and the public left at 9.50pm

The meeting returned to Part I and closed at 10.20pm.

Signed.....

Date.....