

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in the Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 13th January 2016 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors: Pam Barrett (Deputy Chair), Ron Fox, Billy Hartstein, Fanny Jackson, Janet Jones, Linus McCloskey, Mark Maish, Simon Rines, Dan Simpson, Neil Smith, Graham Squires, Andy Stokes and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

Press: No representatives of the Press

8 members of the public, one of whom arrived during Agenda Item No 11)

In attendance: Cllrs Charlie Dennis and John Nutley (District), Kathryn Hughes (Chair of Buckfastleigh Community Forum)

Part I. (Open to the Public)

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

16/177. Questions raised by the Public:

No questions from the public.

16/178. New Town Councillor Enrolment:

Fanny Jackson was welcomed as a newly elected Councillor following the Town Council by-election held in December 2015.

16/179. Update by representatives of the Poppy Appeal:

Colin Harmes and Dean Sellick attended on behalf of the Poppy Appeal for Buckfastleigh:

Colin Harmes: There was a decrease of £400 from the previous year for donations to the Poppy Appeal, but the number of wreaths purchased had doubled.

He expressed his disappointment about the number of representatives from the Town Council who attended the Remembrance Sunday service at St. Luke's Church and Holy Trinity War Memorial. He also said that there had been a lack of engagement with local Poppy Appeal collectors and confusion over the purchase of the Council wreath. He emphasised that although the service is held in church, Remembrance Sunday is not a religious service and Council support is expected.

Cllr Mark Maish: Although there is respect for the service, people might choose to mark their remembrance in other ways and not everyone is in a position to attend church.

Cllr Janet Jones: Remembrance Sunday is a community event.

Cllr Pam Barrett: There were 5 Councillors and the Town Clerk at the service and asked how many councillors have attended in previous years. The confusion about the purchase of the wreath arose because of staff absences and resulted in the purchase of an additional wreath to ensure that the Council was properly represented at the event. The Council fully supports Remembrance Day and those who participate. It would also support the reinstatement of a Buckfastleigh British Legion if community volunteers were minded to revive it. Cllr Barrett

also mentioned the useful discussion which had taken place after the Remembrance service between Colin Harmes, serving Officer Mike Rogers and herself about doing something about the neglected war graves in the cemetery of those who died of their wounds after the end of the war. She had also suggested that the names of those soldiers could also be included in the Remembrance Service.

Action: Members agreed that a working party be set up to consider how the war graves could be included at next year's ceremony and the setting up of a Buckfastleigh Royal British Legion branch again in the town. Cllr Janet Jones will organise a working party with Colin Harmes and other community volunteers.

Dean Sellick: Suggestion that representatives of the Poppy Appeal should meet with the Town Council prior to the next Remembrance Sunday to discuss protocol.

The War Memorial was completely refurbished with grant funding from Devon Remembers and Buckfast Abbey in 2014 and that the Poppy Appeal is well supported in the town.

16/180. Police Report:

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

44 incidents had been recorded with 8 relating to the A38.

The number of Landrover thefts in the Buckfastleigh and Ashburton rural areas has increased.

There is a cold caller operating in the area selling kitchen supplies and the police urge residents not to purchase any goods or services from people selling door to door. 'No Cold Caller' stickers are available from Town Hall reception.

It was noted that there has been an increased number of weather related traffic collisions including a fatality on the A38.

Sergeant Mark Rushton has left as the Neighbourhood Team Leader and PC Will Young is currently the acting Sergeant in the interim.

16/181. Reports from County Councillor and District Councillors:

A report had been provided by Cllr Stuart Barker which the Chair summarised:-

Devon County Council (DCC) have agreed a 1.95% increase to the Council Tax which is the same amount as the previous year. The Council has had to find savings of £34.3m this year due to the continuing removal of rate support from Government.

In addition to this increase there will be an additional 2% increase which will be ring fenced for adult social care. This will part fund the Councils cost of the National Living Wage which will raise the wages of carers. Adult and Children's services will have an increase in their budget of 5.4% or £16.1m.

DCC has made a grant fund available for towns with flood wardens or emergency flooding plans. The Town Council can apply to the Community Council of Devon for up to £2,000 for equipment to be used during flood events and further details can be found on the Devon Community Resilience Forum website.

Cllrs Charlie Dennis and John Nutley had attended a recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Teignbridge District Council (TDC) have agreed to increase the Council Tax by 1.95% which is the first increase in five years due to decreasing Government funding.

Car parking charges will be subject to a small increase.

There has been a good response to the new recycling process with a 30% take up for the new green bins. Recent collection delays have been as a result of the new vehicles not coping with the increase in household recycling and the District Council apologise for this.

Cllr Dennis has been appointed to the new TDC Railway Review Group where they will be looking at a new rail route to avoid Dawlish. Network Rail favour the Okehampton route which will add 40 minutes to the journey across the county. Cllr Dennis however, favours the Teign Valley route. The first meeting will take place in March and information will be circulated to the community accordingly. There is also suggestion for a park and ride service from Heathfield to Newton Abbot.

Cllr John Nutley is a member of the car parking review group and is liaising with Cllr Rines concerning Buckfastleigh. Car parking revenue should raise £140,000 towards the budget.

16/182. Apologies:

Councillors: Stuart Barker (District and County)

Cllr Ron Fox was welcomed back by the Chair.

16/183. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

16/184. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 16th December 2015:

Signed and approved by Councillor Pam Barrett.

16/185. To receive the minutes of the Tourism, Recreation and Economic Development Committee held on 5th January 2016:

Noted.

16/186. Whitecleave Quarry Noise Complaints:

Cllr Pam Barrett: The Town Council has written to DCC to request a meeting with officers to discuss a number of issues around activity on the site including the handling of noise complaints.

The Whitecleave Quarry Working Party (WQWP) had recommended that further information be provided to the community about the current activity at the quarry, how complaints could be raised and how they might expect them to be investigated and resolved. A draft leaflet had been produced and Cllr Barrett proposed that it be circulated to Councillors for comment and approval for distribution to all households. It was stressed that the production and delivery of the leaflet will be at no cost to the Town Council.

Decision: Proposal to deliver the leaflet to the community by Cllr Janet Jones which was seconded by Cllr Andy Stokes with all Members in agreement.

16/187. To discuss a review of Town Council committees, working parties and communications structure:

Cllr Pam Barrett: This review has previously been discussed by Members, but not formulated and needs to be agreed ready for the new financial year in April. Cllr Barrett has looked at different models.

The Clerk explained the purpose of the committees and how these are linked to full Council for resolution.

Cllr Pam Barrett: Suggestion to review each committee and look at delegated authority and powers with new terms of reference.

Action: Clerk to arrange a working party meeting to formulate a new proposal to be presented at full Council. Members of the working party – Cllrs Pam Barrett, Janet Jones, Fanny Jackson, Dan Simpson, Neil Smith, Andy Stokes and the Clerk.

16/188. To review standards of communication and behaviour towards Councillor and staff:

Cllr Pam Barrett: There has been concern that allegations have been made personally, verbally and online to individual Councillors and the Town Clerk.

Decision: Agreed to adopt a communications protocol and a policy on how to deal with unreasonable behaviour.

Action: The Clerk to draft a simplified policy following research.

A discussion took place regarding the use of social media against the Town Council and allegations of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct which have not been substantiated.

Councillor Charlie Dennis left the meeting at 8.45pm

16/189. To discuss issues regarding A38 safety:

The number of accidents occurring at the blackspot within the vicinity of Dean Prior Church and Rattery Hill in both directions has increased particularly due to higher rainfall levels which is leading to aquaplaning by vehicles. Another fatality has recently occurred in this area and the Council expressed sadness and concern that this has happened.

Action: The Clerk to request police statistics in relation to accidents in this particular area and send a letter to the Highways Agency with a request to improve signage and drainage and to examine the camber of the road.

16/190. Chairman's Announcements:

No announcements.

16/191. Clerk's Announcements:

No announcements.

16/192. Correspondence:

- i) DCC acknowledgement dated 12.01.16 to the letter dated 08.01.16 from the Town Council to Dr P. Norrey, Chief Executive of DCC advising that this has been passed to the Customer Service Team for a response.

Cllr Neil Smith: Questioned as to why the responsible officer who has a duty of care to local residents will not be responding personally to the letter which was addressed to him. It is not known if he has read the letter or is even aware of it.

Decision: Clerk to clarify the above and whether Dr Norrey asked the Customer Service Team to respond on his behalf and that he will subsequently endorse their response.

16/193. Reports from other meetings and working parties attended by Members:

Cllr Simon Rines reported from the Whitecleave Quarry Liaison Group meeting held that morning. The main discussion was around the ongoing noise issue and there was a dispute over the accuracy of the minutes taken by the quarry operator.

Noise trials and monitoring permits hammering for 30 minutes in every hour if there is a westerly wind. DCC and the quarry operator maintain that the current noise levels are within those conditions permitted by the planning permission. Members expressed their concerns about the way in which the sound trials had been conducted and the ongoing monitoring of noise emissions. Acoustic reports are complex and it would be useful to have a better understanding of the methodology used. The Action Log has not been updated for some time. It is understood that DCC did not believe that it was helpful and is viewed as a log of concerns rather than complaints.

A report is being produced for Block D. There is a consensus to centralise complaints to the planning authority and it is important that the Town Council meets with DCC to discuss this.

TDC are looking at whether a statutory noise nuisance would stand against a planning condition, but it was noted that TDC still has a duty of care to investigate statutory noise nuisances and take action if substantiated.

Cllr Simon Rines: It would be useful if an estimated date for all quarrying to be completed could be provided.

Cllr Mark Maish: What will the noise impact be beyond the removal of Block D which has acted as a buffer in part?

Kathryn Hughes: The quarry operator will need to submit a blasting scheme for the next stage, awaiting clarification of this. The Variation of Condition 10 planning application is still outstanding although it is understood that the Visual Impact Assessment is nearly complete.

Cllr Mark Maish: Request for the report copy of the minutes to be sent to the Town Council. It should be noted if someone disagrees with the minutes and earlier circulation of information is needed.

Kathryn Hughes: The issue of bats will be on the next WQLG agenda.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The environmental impact of the rock extraction has been requested as part of the letter sent by the Town Council to the Chief Executive of Devon County Council.

Cllr Mark Maish: It has been noted that there is an inaccuracy on the site drawings regarding the extent that quarrying is permitted.

Cllr Pam Barrett: Concern that this site which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) has been destroyed.

Cllrs Squires and Rines attended a meeting of the Buckfastleigh Community Development Project (Trust) (BCDPT) re the Bungalow Youth Project which was constructive. Cllr Rines has offered to mediate between the BCDPT and the Victoria Park trustees.

Cllr Janet Jones reported from a recent Friends of Buckfastleigh Library meeting and confirmed that extra funding had been received. Cllr Barrett suggested that a monthly gadget drop-in club could be arranged at the library following the feedback from a recent residents IT session in the Town Hall.

Cllr Andy Stokes thanked the organisers of the Christmas Day meal in St. Luke's Church and suggested that next year's publicity aim to involve a wider range of people to make it much more of a community event and celebration.

Member of Public: *Some of the older generation might not welcome lots of children at the event and no transport had been arranged which had been the case in previous years.*

Cllr Linus McCloskey reported that he is now a member of the management committee for the Foodbank. There is no diminish in need for this service and the enormous generosity of the public was acknowledged. Volunteers for food collections are however, needed. Cllr McCloskey is planning to have a CAB outreach facility at the Foodbank.

Cllr Simon Rines: the new Town Guide is nearing completion and some interesting facts about the town have been discovered together with the creation of a new wildlife map.

16/194. Urgent Items:

Cllr John Nutley confirmed that he is liaising with Cllr Rines concerning car parking. It has been noted that there is increasing pressure on the Station Road car park and that local residents with permits often cannot find a space. The new double yellow lines at Old Totnes Road has moved the problem into this area.

Cllr Pam Barrett would like the Council to look at the transfer of liabilities as the Town Council has no revenue raising assets. What money does the District Council actually spend on Buckfastleigh? The Town Council needs a revenue stream and Woodholme car park is one asset that is currently being looked at.

Cllr Andy Stokes advised that there has not been any progress with the composting scheme due to the problems surrounding the trust covenant for the proposed site behind the Curious Goose nursery. The Recycling Officer at TDC is assisting with this initiative.

Meeting closed at 9.46pm.

Signed.....

Date.....