

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Environment and Transport Committee Meeting held on 7th March 2018.

Present: Councillors Janet Jones (Chair), Pam Barrett, Pamela Forbes, Andy Stokes, Ron Fox and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

2 members of the public in attendance

Part I (Open to the Public)

18/152. Questions raised by the public:

Anne Goulborn spoke on behalf of the Scoriton and Buckfastleigh Twinning Association who are requesting Town Council support for the addition of a twinning reference to the three town entrance signs. The signs are owned by Teignbridge District Council (TDC) and the estimated cost is £150 per sign.

Action: Clerk to send a letter of support to the Twinning Association to submit with their request to TDC. The Town Council would like a breakdown of costs, when available and suggested that the group could apply for a small grant.

18/153. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Mark Maish and Linus McCloskey

18/154. Declaration of Interests: None

18/155. To approve & sign as correct the Minutes of the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee meeting on Wednesday 7th February 2018.

Signed and approved by Cllr Janet Jones

18/156. Review of actions from previous meeting:

Dart Mills HGV – following complaints from residents about alleged HGV activity and the use of floodlights during the night, the Clerk is awaiting a response from the Enforcement Officer.

School parking problems – representatives of the school did not attend the Town Council meeting or the parking review meeting to discuss this matter further. Cllr Janet Jones has invited them to contribute and participate. The PCSO has confirmed that he is unable to police problem parking around the school due to lack of resources but agrees that volunteers and staff from the school could set up their own patrol to alleviate the problem and highlight the danger to parents.

Parking review – see Agenda Item No. 8, Minute No. 18/159

A38 safety concerns – The Clerk has sent a second letter to Highways England following the Boxing Day fatality and increasing concerns about road safety in the Rattery Hill, Dean Prior area of the A38.

Whitecleave Quarry Working Party – the date of the next meeting has not been agreed due to other commitments. The Clerk confirmed that the Town Council is not permitted to make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman as a public authority, but an individual can, and the Council can provide support and advice.

Community-led Affordable Housing discussion – information requested from Amy Luxton, the TDC Enabling Officer has been received and forwarded to Cllr Andy Stokes to consider.

Burrington Estates – Members expressed concern with regards to the lack of community consultation for the development of the Holne Road allocated site. The developer attended one Town Council meeting in the summer and was asked to return with a design brief which was agreed at the time. The developer has now withdrawn his offer to attend one of the scheduled meetings in March and has said that Councillors can contact them by telephone. Consultation with the community has only been with the use of an online survey which is not accessible to all residents.

Action: The Clerk has invited the developer to arrange a public consultation event in the Town Hall. Invitation to be published on the Town Council’s social media channels.

Dog illness – it has been confirmed by vets that there is no evidence that the recent mystery dog illness was caused by poison and that it could have been a virus.

18/157. Comments on planning applications received prior to this meeting and after Agenda set:

No applications of significant interest to the community were brought to this meeting.

18/158. Green spaces and community assets meeting update:

Cllr Mark Maish was not in attendance to report back from the meeting held on 20th February.

Cllr Pam Barrett advised that it was a positive meeting. Some people expressed interest in setting up community gardens and have volunteered to participate. It was noted however, that this is a large, complex issue which is a lengthy process and needs to be fully costed and resourced, staff and legal implications would also need to be considered. A broad set of skills is required, and it would take a huge amount of work to achieve. This initiative should benefit the whole Buckfastleigh community and not just individuals interested in growing fruit and vegetables. The outcome of this meeting and next step has not been discussed. A member of the public offered to research how other councils and community groups have set up community gardens and will report back to this meeting.

18/159. Parking Review meeting update:

25 residents attended the parking review meeting. A second meeting will take place on Monday 23rd April in the Town Hall. Volunteers have been recruited to collect information on parking information using the templates provided. The data from this will be collated to establish what parking is available and what restrictions are currently in place. Cllr Janet Jones and the Town Ranger will continue to work on this.

Members agreed that residents want convenient parking which is close to their homes, but this is not possible in areas where properties have no on-site or allocated parking such as Fore Street and Jordan Street. The Town Council cannot resolve this. Some residents attended the meeting to voice their complaints but could not offer any solutions.

It was agreed that the second meeting needs to focus on requesting ideas from the public. Only small improvements can be made to ease the situation, but the Council cannot suddenly provide parking for all when many households have three cars or more. Residents-only parking zones have been suggested or a residents-only car park. There is concern that the Town Council will be viewed as not achieving anything when there is no solution. It must be made clear at public meetings what the Town Council can do.

Action: Admin Assistant to prepare an information leaflet for residents to clarify the responsibilities and statutory powers of each local authority.

18/160. Use of organic pesticides and herbicides – policy discussion:

Cllr Mark Maish is leading on this item. The Town Council has banned TDC from using glyphosates in the town to control weed growth, but no alternative proposal has been agreed.

Member of Public: Not using herbicides makes the removal of weeds very labour intensive.

It was agreed that the worst areas in town need to be identified.

18/161. Whitecleave Quarry update: Discussed under Minute No. 18/156

18/162. To discuss the planning, management and communications issues for projects which are within the remit of this committee:

Solar panels – Cllr Andy Stokes confirmed that drawings from the contractor have been sent to the planning authority for approval. Once approved the Town Council can pay the deposit so that work can commence. Work to the swimming pool needs to be completed by early May or if this is not feasible, delayed until October when the pool is closed. The roof construction work needs to be undertaken and tested as soon as Dartmoor National Park Authority approval is given.

18/163. Correspondence: None

18/164. Items requiring urgent attention:

TDC off-street parking charges and time restrictions review – the Clerk had received this document just before the meeting.

Decision: It was agreed due to the limited time available for consultation that the Clerk should request an extension, upload to social media for comment and circulate for the April meeting.

Severe weather issues - Cllr Pam Barrett congratulated the individual efforts of residents but confirmed that the Emergency Plan was not activated during recent heavy snowfall. There are currently no snow wardens despite advertising for volunteers. If the snow had continued for a longer period there would have been significant problems.

The flood practice exercise has been arranged for Tuesday 27th March. It was agreed that the Council needs to address our approach to recruiting volunteers and note the failures in our plan. Cllr Barrett suggested creating a small planning cell and collate information on who can offer help such as 4x4 drivers, tractor drivers, plumbers, electricians, who can check on vulnerable residents, help with gritting etc. Social media posts indicated that there are people willing and able to help in times of emergency.

The Council also needs to establish methods of communication and it was suggested that those who deliver the community news sheet could check on the residents who live within their area of delivery. The emergency leaflet created by the Clerk could be updated, reactivated and circulated to households for information.

Meeting closed at 8.35pm