

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Environment and Transport Committee Meeting held on 2nd May 2018.

Present: Councillors Janet Jones (Chair), Pam Barrett, Huw Cox, Pamela Forbes, Ron Fox, Andy Stokes and Judith Hart (Town Clerk). Cllr Ron Fox arrived at 7.35 pm.

In attendance: Cllr Philip Vogel (Ashburton Town Council) and Amy Luxton (Housing Enabler Officer, Teignbridge District Council) re Agenda Item No. 2

Part I (Open to the Public)

18/13. Questions raised by the public: None

18/14. Community Land Trust Presentation:

Cllr Philip Vogel explained that a Community Land Trust (CLT) is a form of community-led housing, set up and run by ordinary people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets. CLTs act as long-term stewards of housing, ensuring that it remains genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, not just for now but for every future occupier.

There is a need to have a legally constituted body, such as a Town Council, to lead and be the guardian of the organisation. The Council can call for a CLT and act as ambassadors and facilitators, but also reports back via the Clerk. Councillors can be members of the CLT as individuals once the trust is set up with a bank account. Cllr Vogel advised that the Town Council should research the information provided by the National CLT Network.

A CLT can ensure that affordable housing remains so. It can also initiate a business hub, liaising with the Chamber of Trade and landowners to improve infrastructure such as the provision of car parks, allotments and community gardens.

Cllr Vogel was asked why the group did not pursue a Community Interest Company or a Charitable Incorporated Organisation?

Cllr Vogel replied that a CLT has a stronger position and has the weight of a statutory body behind it.

It was noted that there had been a CLT in Buckfastleigh set up for a self-build initiative, but no land came forward at the time to develop this further, so it was dissolved.

Cllr Vogel said that self-build is now part of the new Teignbridge Local Plan.

Salaries in this area are not high enough to support home ownership and there is a definite need for social rented housing. We are also now aware that there is an increasing number of over 60s who are in need, i.e. they want to downsize properties. This would free up the market for 3-bed houses for families. The elderly however, need to stay near to their families and support networks within their own community.

The next step is to create a steering group and gauge support. The Town Council would firstly need to arrange a public meeting about it to take this initiative further.

Cllr Pam Barrett: Would there be any benefit to Buckfastleigh joining Ashburton's CLT?

Cllr Phillip Vogel: There might be some benefit in having joint projects such as a social enterprise. If a ward can cross two boundaries, then a CLT can too.

He suggested that the two Council Chairs should meet and have a discussion.

Amy Luxton: A CLT as a legal mechanism can bring a community together to explore solutions for itself without being dependent on commercial decisions. It gives a community empowerment and allows the possibility of other options and funding. The town needs to establish that there is interest and 5-12 trustees are required to set up a CLT. Professional expertise is also helpful. It only has a £1 liability so a CLT gives its members better protection.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The availability of land in Buckfastleigh is a real issue due to the steep gradients. The only level site is in the centre of town and the owner will not engage with the Town Council. The town is also surrounded by South Hams so cannot expand.

Amy Luxton will send further information about the funding available from Teignbridge District Council (TDC) to facilitate a consultation with the town which the Clerk will circulate.

An affordable housing stall will be at Lamb Pie Day in July and residents will be able to register on the housing list at that time.

18/15. Apologies for absence: Cllr Linus McCloskey. Cllr Mark Maish did not attend

18/16. Declaration of Interests: None

18/17. To approve & sign as correct the Minutes of the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee meeting on Wednesday 4th April 2018.

Signed and approved by Cllr Janet Jones

Cllr Andy Stokes proposed changing the meeting start time to 7.30pm and this was seconded by Cllr Pam Barrett with all Members in favour.

18/18. Review of actions from previous meeting:

Speeding – There has been no response from the Devon and Cornwall Community Speedwatch scheme. It was suggested that this is highlighted to the Chief Constable to encourage an answer.

Cllrs Jones and Cox are organising a petition to ensure that Buckfastleigh has the 20mph speed limit proposed by Central Government for smaller towns and that the petition also includes a request for a 30mph limit to be introduced in Strode Road.

A38 safety concerns – The Clerk confirmed that there is still no response from Highways England. Copies of correspondence to be sent the Secretary of State for Transport.

18/19. Comments on planning applications received prior to this meeting and after Agenda set:

Two recent applications were noted: a change of use of agricultural land to garden in Bossell Road and erection of agricultural building at land between Greendown Farm and Kingsdown. Cllr Jones has liaised with Dartmoor National Park (DNPA) and no matters of significant concern were raised.

It was noted that there is an allegation that Buckfast Abbey is creating an unauthorised overflow car park at the end of Abbey Grange Close. This matter has been referred to DNPA Enforcement for investigation.

18/20. South Hams Special Area of Conservation: Greater Horseshoe Bats Supplementary Planning Document – Consultation Draft February 2018

The consultation proposes to make changes to the regulations for the Greater Horseshoe Bat habitat protection in relation to their foraging and commuting zones. The proposal in the consultation is to modify the Haytor and Chudleigh zones.

The consultation has provoked a huge amount of concern amongst wildlife organisations. The proposal appears to assist development and not enhance bat protection. The supplementary notes have not been made available as part of the consultation. The proposal is to change the protection zone from 4km from the SSSI boundary to 4km from the actual roost site. No effective monitoring or enforcement measures are included in the document and it appears to support less regulation. If there is no precautionary principle, then the assumption is that there are no bats present. It is not based on known flight paths and claims there is no sustenance value in urban areas for Greater Horseshoe bats, which is not true with Buckfastleigh as an example of this.

Action: Clerk to clarify if the consultation deadline date has been extended.

Further reports to be sent to the Town Council by wildlife groups to enable an informed response.

18/21. National Planning Policy Framework – Consultation Draft March 2018:

All the county wildlife areas have been excluded from this document which is effectively removing the current level of environmental protection.

It was suggested that Members meet with Totnes Council to discuss both the bats and NPPF documents. Cllrs Stokes, Jones, Cox and Forbes would like to attend this meeting.

Actions: Clerk to contact Cllrs Jacqui Hodgson and Georgina Allen at Totnes Town Council to arrange a meeting later in the month. Clerk to submit an objection regarding the NPPF which is broadly in line with other organisations due to the approaching deadline date. It was agreed that the Council cannot address all the issues in the draft NPPF as we do not have the relevant expertise.

18/22. Proposal to commission a ‘Who Does What’ information leaflet for residents:

There is a need to make the leaflet more locally specific and it was agreed to engage a designer to create the leaflet.

Action: Cllr Stokes to edit and liaise with the Admin Assistant with a view to publication in early autumn.

18/23. To discuss the planning, management and communications issues for projects which are within the remit of this committee:

Solar panels – Cllr Andy Stokes reported that he is currently in receipt of quotes for the Town Hall and not the swimming pool. The original contractor has requested terms of payment which are not acceptable to the Town Council.

Action: Cllr Stokes to seek a further quote.

18/24. Correspondence:

Dart Mills HGV activity: The Clerk has now received a response from the TDC Enforcement Officer to confirm that the traffic management company using the site is operating within the planning permission granted in 1984. Members agreed however, that the permission granted at that time is not necessarily relevant to now.

Cllr Pam Barrett confirmed that the Devon Wildlife Trust is looking at the response from TDC as there are concerns regarding the lighting and the impact this is having on the bats who use this area adjacent to the river Dart as a foraging route.

18/25. Items requiring urgent attention: None

Meeting closed at 8.58 pm