

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Tourism, Recreation and Economic Development Committee Meeting** held on **Tuesday 4th April 2017 at 7.30pm.**

Present: Councillors: - Simon Rines (Chair), Pam Barrett, Neil Smith, Ron Fox and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

In attendance: Ann Werry (Orchard Millennium Green Trust - OMG), Sheila Phillips (William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust – WPCST), John Brodribb (Museum Curator, South Devon Railway – SDR), Geoff Pring (Warden & Site Administrator, Buckfast Abbey) and John Bailey (Chairman of Buckfastleigh Rangers Football Club - BRFC)

17/01. Questions from the public: None.

17/02. Apologies: Councillors Dan Simpson, Greg Porter and Fanny Jackson
Maureen Tuffnell (OMG and W.I.) and Nigel Evans (Accommodation Manager, Buckfast Abbey)

17/03. Declarations of Interest: None

17/04. To approve and sign as correct the Minutes of the Tourism and Recreational Committee meeting held on Tuesday 17th January 2017.

Signed and approved by Cllr Simon Rines.

17/05. Chair to invite comments from the local attractions and members of the Buckfastleigh Chamber of Trade represented at this meeting:

Sheila Phillips: The caves and visitor centre are already busy and this is expected to continue throughout the summer season. 15 Environmental Officers from Devon County Council will be visiting in July and the Devonshire Association Annual Conference will be held at Buckfast Abbey between 2nd and 4th of June.

A family Bat Day is being arranged for the summer and guided walks will take place every Thursday evening in August. The centre will be closed from 6th to 27th May for electrical refurbishment works.

The caves are now part of the 'Children's University' initiative where children who visit attractions around the county can have a card stamped as proof of entry and when the card is full they are invited to attend a graduation ceremony held at Plymouth University. The Valiant Soldier, Buckfast Abbey and South Devon Railway are encouraged to join this scheme which promotes learning experiences outside of the school environment.

John Brodribb: Development of the railway site continues with the building of a new carriage shed which will accommodate 8 carriages undercover and new sidings are also being constructed.

The annual programme of events will take place during the year and early indications already show that there is likely to be a higher footfall than last year.

Cllr Pam Barrett thanked SDR for hosting the swimming pool fund raising event, 'All Hands to the Pump' in March which again was very successful.

Ann Werry: The replacement perimeter fence around the green has now been completed together with a new floor for the tea hut and new notice boards. The first tea-on-the-

green event will take place on Easter Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday and this will continue every Sunday and Bank Holiday during the summer. The annual Fun Day and Duck Race will take place on Sunday 25th June and will include a performance by the 1940s group, the Liberty Sisters. The group are currently tidying up the flower beds to encourage wildlife and the shelter is scheduled to be completed later in the summer.

Geoff Pring: A new organ from Italy will be arriving at the Abbey after Easter so there will not be any musical events held in the Abbey until the autumn due to the lengthy installation process. The Grange Restaurant will however, host some musical evenings and preparation continues for the Millennium anniversary in 2018. A new monastic exhibition is being created which will possibly be the only one of its kind in Europe and a new book about Buckfast Abbey, with contributions by 12 authors, will be available in the autumn. Local schools are attending Easter workshops together with family drop-in sessions. Bell ringers are being sought for Thursday evening practice and the Abbey is currently hosting some Russian Orthodox services to assist the community who have lost their accommodation in Newton Abbot. A bee husbandry programme has just commenced which will include courses and taster days. The Abbey is working with some local groups promoting bee-keeping as a community activity.

John Bailey: The football club are using the pitch more with two regular teams. It is acknowledged that the club house is an underused facility although they do not receive any funding or sponsorship. The pitch is only used once a week however, and is often too wet to use in the winter. A new committee has been formed for 2017.

Cllr Pam Barrett advised that the proposed new floodlights for the football pitch must be adequate for use by both Devon Air Ambulance and the football club, but some LED lighting is not suitable for bats. Quotes have been received for new floodlights and the Helipad working party are looking at various options. The swimming pool will be opening from Saturday 27th May to Sunday 3rd September 2017 and most of the new play park is open and actively being used.

John Brodribb: Buckfastleigh will again be entering the 'Britain in Bloom' competition following the success of winning two outstanding entries in 2016.

17/06. Town Guide update:

The Town Guide has now been distributed door to door around the parish and residents are being encouraged to return their read copies to the Town Hall due to a depleting stock. It was agreed that a further print round is required for the new tourist season, but cost and copyright issues need to be examined further.

17/07. Proposal to organise a Press trip in 2018 to promote tourism:

Cllr Simon Rines explained the proposal to the meeting, but due to the amount of work required and other commitments within the Council there has been no further progress with this initiative. The Council needs to establish when the event could realistically take place, in partnership with other organisations in the town and it was suggested that the vintage bus could be used to transport the delegates around the parish.

17/08. Meeting with representatives of Buckfast Abbey update:

A meeting has been scheduled with representatives of the Abbey on Monday 10th April 2017.

17/09. Creating a promotional video programme update:

The Council has been researching the feasibility of creating some short promotional videos to highlight the different attractions and features of the town.

It is acknowledged that the Council budget is unlikely to be enough to produce good quality adverts that are suitable for use on social media and it was suggested that this could be a project undertaken by students when a proper design brief has been drawn up.

17/10. Discussion on proposals for a sports policy and programme in the town:

The Town Council hosted a meeting at the Town Hall on Thursday 30th March which included representatives from the swimming pool, rugby, football and cricket clubs and a resident who is keen to promote tennis.

The meeting looked at the existing sports facilities available in the town and agreed that there needs to be a proper strategy for sport to identify where it takes place, what is available, how it is funded and to ensure sport in the town is more inclusive to encourage children and women's/girl's teams.

A second meeting has been arranged for Thursday 27th April 2017.

The group will be looking at applying for grants to upgrade changing facilities, the suggestion to create a 5-a-side football pitch together with other ideas that included an athletics track and gym. It was agreed however, that more volunteers are needed and to broaden participation as there was no representation from the smaller sports groups at this meeting.

A sports weekend/festival is now being arranged for the third weekend in July at the football club which will include taster sessions for a wide variety of sports such as climbing and archery.

It is important to raise awareness of what sports activities are available in the town by carrying out an audit for eg. the football club has a full-size snooker table and skittles alley. The Town Council is also examining the ownership and charitable trust arrangements for all the publicly held land in the town which includes recreational space.

Cllr Simon Rines confirmed that the Council has provisionally booked 'Colourscape' to coincide with the sports weekend and explained that this is a large air-supported structure that contains various chambers where visitors can experience and enjoy a range of colour and sound experiences. This project is subsidised by the Arts Council, but the Council would need to contribute approx. £3,000 and there will be an entry charge by the organiser.

'Colourscape' has never been hosted this far south before and would attract a high number of visitors including those with special needs. The cost includes a second weekend event in 2018, but this initiative would need full Council to agree to underwrite the cost.

17/11. Correspondence:

The Clerk confirmed that the boundary stone which will be installed by Dartmoor National Park, has now been engraved and is ready to be erected at Hockmoor Head. Members agreed to nominate Cllr Janet Jones as the Council's representative if a small ceremony is required to mark the occasion.

17/12. Items requiring urgent attention:

Following the success of the 1940's night in the Town Hall in 2016, a second event in partnership with South Devon Railway has been arranged for Friday 30th June, but more volunteers are needed to help with setting up, clearing away etc.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm