

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Tourism, Recreation and Economic Development Committee Meeting** held on **Tuesday 10th October 2017 at 7.30pm.**

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING WAS NOT QUORATE AND ANY DECISION FROM THIS MEETING IS NOT LEGALLY BINDING.

Present: Councillors: - Pam Barrett (Acting Chair), Ron Fox, Dan Simpson and Judith Hart (Town Clerk)

In attendance: Peter Edwards (The Valiant Soldier), Wendy Hall (Buckfast Abbey) and John Goulding re RHS Britain in Bloom competition.

17/24. Questions from the public:

John Goulding presented a report regarding Buckfastleigh's recent competition success at the 2017 RHS Britain in Bloom competition: -

The town had major successes in all three of the competitions it entered. The crowning achievement was the town's first-time entry into the Pennant competition, achieving Silver Gilt which acknowledges the hard work put in by so many dedicated volunteers.

In the It's Your Neighbourhood awards there were two Advancing awards, five thriving and five outstanding awards for Harding Court, the Wildspace Garden, the Duckspend Garden, The Orchard Millennium Green, Hamlyn Court and Food 4 Ever.

Barn Park play area, South Devon Railway, Buckfast Abbey and Victoria Park all achieved Outstanding. In the Leisure and Commercial competition Salmon's Leap achieved Silver Gilt and both South Devon Railway and Buckfast Abbey were awarded Gold certificates.

Buckfastleigh Primary School was one of only seven nominations from the whole of the South West for the Outstanding School Entry Award.

17/25. Apologies: Councillors Simon Rines, Greg Porter and Neil Smith.

Councillor Fanny Jackson did not attend.

Ann Werry (Orchard Millennium Green Trust - OMG), Maureen Tuffnell (OMG and W.I.)

Sheila Phillips (William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust – WPCST), John Brodribb (Museum Curator, South Devon Railway – SDR),

17/26. Declarations of Interest: None

17/27. To approve and sign as correct the Minutes of the Tourism and Recreational Committee meeting held on Tuesday 4th April 2017.

Minutes to the meeting held on 4th April 2017 to be deferred until the next quorate meeting.

17/28. To note as a correct record and sign the Minutes of the Non-Quorate meeting held on Monday 3rd July 2017.

As above.

17/29. Chair to invite comments from the local attractions and members of the Buckfastleigh Chamber of Trade represented at this meeting:

Wendy Hall: *The Abbey held a well-attended book launch earlier in the month for the new Millennium Book – ‘Buckfast Abbey: History, Art and Architecture’ which chronicles the history of the Abbey and its site.*

The Rotary Club of Ashburton and Buckfastleigh again held their popular art exhibition in the Medieval Hall in July and the Devon Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers held a three-day exhibition with demonstrations both inside and outside the Hall. The Abbey was also pleased to welcome back the Emergency Poet and her 1970’s ambulance back for a ‘repeat prescription,’ in the grounds.

The Grange Restaurant will be hosting another Coffee and Food Fayre with over 30 exhibitors this month. Both the restaurant and the Monastic Produce Shop will be selling goods at the Dame Hannah Roger’s Trust Christmas Gift Fayre on 10th and 11th November and at The Dartington Hall Christmas Fayre on 16th and 17th December.

The new gift shop will be opening in November and the new Exhibition Visitors Centre will be open in time for Easter and will include the history of the site as well as a typical day in the life of a monk.

Following on from the success of the Gardening Department’s Millennium Garden at RHS Great Malvern this spring winning a Silver Medal and First in the People’s Choice, the garden will be re-created in the Abbey grounds on 2nd June 2018 and there will also be a Gardening Fayre onsite during the day.

As part of the Millennium celebrations, the Abbey will be hosting a Civic and Ecumenical Service on 11th July which local Mayors and Councillors will be invited too together with a Festival of Music from 14th to 22nd April 2018.

It was noted that the Town Council would be pleased to link into the 2018 Millennium events to encourage visitors to the town.

It was suggested that a flyer is produced detailing all the other town attractions which could be made available at the Abbey during their celebrations. The Abbey is also looking at an appropriate site for the second year of Colourscape.

Cllr Pam Barrett is working with Geoff Pring from the Abbey which is hosting the community Christmas Day lunch for a second year.

Peter Edwards: *The Valiant Soldier should not be regarded as just a museum it is also a Heritage Centre. Unfortunately, there has not been enough footfall this year despite complimentary comments from visitors.*

There are problems with marketing which need to be identified and resolved.

The first memory clinic was recently held in the Centre, and work continues on the archive which is increasing in size.

It was suggested that the town has a 'freshers' type event to enable all the voluntary organisations to advertise together with a volunteer awards scheme. Cllr Barrett emphasised the need for volunteers to attend the free training sessions that the Town Council have facilitated in the Town Hall.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The swimming pool has had a good year despite the weather with increased footfall. The pricing structure is still being developed. Night swims are very popular and incorporate talks from organisations such as Dartmoor Skies and the Devon Wildlife Trust. A heated Boxing Day swim has also been arranged.

The Moor Otters initiative was hugely successful. Buckfastleigh hosted five otters and it is understood that Dartmoor National Park are looking at repeating this in 2018.

The William Pengelly Higher Kiln Cave was re-opened in August and the town's Christmas Fair will take place on Wednesday 6th December.

17/30. "Hello summer" 2017 update:

Free children's activities were held throughout the school summer holidays which attracted around 400 children. The Town Council are looking at the feasibility of combining with the workshops and events that were also offered by the Abbey without creating any duplication.

The new Awards for All grant and money from Victoria Park has provided the opportunity for activities to start again this autumn. Parkour has been arranged in the park and bouncy castle sessions in the Town Hall together with a Halloween event during Half Term week.

17/31. New grant funding award for the youth activities project update:

The Awards for All grant will be used to develop a youth programme, but paid staff will need to be recruited to coordinate the project and run the activities.

17/32. Town Guide update:

The Town Council has a long-term contract to produce five editions of a Town Guide over 10 years. Three editions have been published, but the Council now wants a guide aimed at tourism as the 'Around Buckfastleigh' publication covers business adverts.

A condition of the contract is that the guide is delivered to all the households within the parish.

The Town Council have requested an amicable break from the contract and are awaiting a response.

17/33. To discuss the planning, management and communications issues for projects which are within the remit of this committee:

Action: The suggestions for a 'freshers' type fair and promotional tourism leaflet to coincide with the Abbey Millennium celebrations to be discussed further at the October Town Council meeting.

17/34. Correspondence: None

17/35. Items requiring urgent attention: None

Meeting closed at 8.35pm