

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Matters Meeting held in Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 10th July 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors: Andy Stokes (Chair), Pam Barrett, John Bailey, Sue Clarke, Huw Cox, Ron Fox, Kate Kayley, David Patrick, Sylvee Phillips, Judith Hart (Town Clerk) and Clair Stevens (Town Hall Administrator)

In attendance: Maureen Tuffnell

Press: No Press in attendance

19/35. Apologies: Cllrs Darren Greep, Gwena Harman, Pamela Forbes, Sarah Parker-Khan (Teignbridge District Council) and Philip Vogel (Parish representative to Dartmoor National Park Authority).

19/36. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

19/37. Questions and comments from the public:

Maureen Tuffnell gave an update on the replacement sign at South Devon Railway (SDR) and reported an overgrown hedge and vegetation covering the directional highway signs opposite the exit of Station Road on Dart Bridge/Strode Road.

Action: Clerk to send a courtesy letter to SDR concerning the new sign and report the obstruction to the directional signs to Devon Highways.

19/38. Minutes of the Council Matters Meeting held on 12th June 2019 and review actions from this meeting:

Signed by Cllr Andy Stokes.

It was noted that there are no outstanding actions from this meeting.

19/39. Management of Buckfastleigh Town Hall

Cllr Barrett gave an introduction on the charity, governance and the Town Council's role as the trustee concerning responsibility for staff, health and safety, access, management, etc. The Council is also a tenant of the Town Hall but must also act in the best interest of the charity and abide by the law. A vast amount of work has been done to meet compliance including various health and safety issues such as fire safety. The charity does not have any reserves and only generates approximately 60% of revenue needed to run it.

In 2018 the Council looked at creating a trust separate from the Town Council with a new board of trustees who are not solely the Town Council. It was agreed that it is not practical for the Councillors to assume the responsibility of handling the VAT, day to day management and building issues. The Town Council would however continue as the tenant and grant funds to the Town Hall as a community asset. There are also various outstanding issues that need to be addressed such as the lack of space for staff, noise issues and conflict between users. Cllrs Barrett and Stokes, Janet Jones and Judith Hart are the current management committee to deal with day to day issues.

The constitution is reasonably flexible to meet the needs of the community, but the two organisations need to separate, or the VAT issue will be raised again. Trustees are needed to oversee the transformation period. There is the opportunity to look at an ambitious scope for

the future of the building or alternatively just carry out improvements that will make it fit for purpose. Regular monthly Town Hall meetings are not so frequent due to other councillor commitments.

Action: Members agreed to advertise for a transitional board of trustees to oversee policies, finance and management and to look at remodelling, the viability and the use of building. Cllrs Bailey, Clarke, Barrett and the Town Clerk to meet in August. Clerk to arrange.

Cllr Barrett also highlighted problems with users calling staff out of hours and issues of security etc. There are huge costs to rectify these issues for e.g. the cost of renewing locks to every door or employing the caretaker to lock up every night. Staff should not be subjected to abuse, call-out charges must be applied, access to collect key cards, equipment etc must be during office opening hours, users should not be using the building for storage. There is a need to convey this to the community and issue a notice to this effect.

Decision: A proposal to ring-fence an estimated initial cost of £5,000 was made to set up a new board of trustees, look at the governance, fundraising and meet legal fees. To be resolved at the July Town Council meeting.

19/40. Budget Analysis Report 01.06.19 – 30.06.19:

Noted. The cost of producing Town Guides will need to be factored into future budgets.

19/41. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.06.19 – 30.06.19:

Noted

19/42. Quarterly Bank Reconciliation Report 30.06.19:

Noted

19/43. Proposal to arrange and fund training to community groups and organisations in Buckfastleigh:

The training course held on 6th July was very successful and established that there is a need for community and organisational training for local groups and some businesses in matters of governance, safeguarding, fundraising, social media, fire safety and first aid. Members agreed that this would be a good use of the Community Development Fund (CDF).

Decision: Members voted unanimously to develop a training programme and ring-fence an initial budget of £500. A further proposal to the July Town Council meeting was agreed to fund further training from the CDF.

There will be different costs depending on who is commissioned to provide the training, what the training is and the cost of the venue.

Learn Devon has agreed to provide some adult training in maths and English.

Charging will depend on the course and as to whether it can be provided for free, by donation or charge (especially if outside the TQ11 postcode).

Cllr Bailey suggested that attendees pay a refundable deposit which is not returned if they fail to attend.

19/44. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest - planning application 0251/19 to build a Premier Inn at Dolbeare Business Park Ashburton:

An extension for responses has been granted to Thursday 25th July by the planning authority. Ashburton Town Council is collating a response, but this is not due until 24th July. There is no clear for or against support for this planning application. Ashburton Town Council is organising a drop-in session for residents on Tuesday 23rd July. It was noted that no attempt has been made to meet carbon zero targets. How will this application affect Buckfastleigh? It is not a green site.

Decision: Response deferred to the July Town Council meeting pending receipt of comments from Ashburton Town Council.

19/45. Councillor updates regarding matters relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Sylvee Phillips attended the Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) Forum. DNPA is consulting on climate change and looking to relax planning to be carbon neutral. There was also a presentation on greenhouse gases, the Extinction Rebellion, re-wilding and tree planning. DNPA will be carrying out a review of their management plan and Local Plan shortly and looking at the impact of Brexit.

Cllr Stokes – A climate change emergency declaration is due by DNPA.

Cllrs Patrick and Phillips attended the Teignbridge District Council (TDC) planning café which included a presentation on the steps of the planning process. It was highlighted that the planners prefer qualitative responses to applications. When a Neighbourhood plan is adopted it carries the same weight as other development plan policies and it is likely that it will gather increasing weight as a material consideration over time.

The Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan needs to be slimmed down and in addition to this create a new parish plan, but this can only complement the Local Plan, not go against it. Another community consultation event is needed to revisit and update the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Town Council's planning review group will meet to discuss this further and with TDC.

TDC continues to promote self-build with sites of more than 20 dwellings, 5% of it must be available for self-build.

The upstream flood management event will be held on Sunday 14th July organised by the Environment Agency. This event will highlight Buckfastleigh to the responsible agencies.

The Freedom of Information response has been received from the South Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust and a meeting is taking place between representatives of the Town Council and the Trust on Thursday 11th July at the Town Hall.

19/46. Items requiring urgent attention:

None

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.