

Mayor's Report – from Annual Town Meeting 22nd May 2019 (notes)

A Good time to review – Here's just some of the things that we did over the last year....

- Grew Hello Summer which was extended to provide activities daily not just during Summer School holidays but also arts & crafts activities (and parkour) for youngsters during Spring & Easter holidays too– This will develop further this year and in the future thanks to help from Pam & Victoria park and their securing a grant to help run it for the next three years
- We commissioned a consultation and plan for joined-up provision for young people in the town which we will be using as a basis to obtain funding and working with groups engaged with young people to make Buckfastleigh a safer and better place for our young people
- Worked and Campaigned and will continue to do so with local people and the primary school to try and make our roads safer
- Held the Heart of Buckfastleigh to celebrate and promote the work of volunteers in the community
- Brought back the psychedelic Colourspace to the football field...
- Held the first SOUP in conjunction with Teignbridge CVS to get people engaged in the distribution of funding – we will make this a part of our annual funding cycle (next one is in June and deadline for bids is this week!)
- Gave away over £8,000 in grants to more than 20 local projects & voluntary groups – we doubled the max size of smaller grants to £500 and introduced the perennial grant for 4 years so that projects could have some security. We further increased the grant pot for one-off grants for this coming year to nearly £10,000...
- Continued to support Victoria Park and Pool to ensure it is able to continue to provide the amazing resource for the community – Thanks to Pam and the trustees of the park for all their incredible work
- Continued to fund the local CAB service in the GPs that has raised over £100,000 for local people for which I thank ex-councillor Linus for running
- Continued to subsidise the Town Hall which provides an essential space for our community – we also set in place the groundwork for the final step in disengaging it from the Town Council and to create a completely separate management structure so it can be run by the community and had to unravel complex legal issues on the way. We will continue to provide financial support to ensure that it not only survives but thrives in the future.
- Ran a Christmas lunch in the Town Hall for those who would be alone or in need on Christmas day which we had a whole load of brilliant volunteers
- Employed our new Town Ranger Ray who has done a magnificent job working to make sure things don't get out of control in the parish – we are lucky to have him
- Climate Emergency declaration – now we need to respond to this and come up with actions that will have an effect locally, and push for change regionally & nationally
- There is a retail crisis in the town and we have had both public meetings and meetings with traders that will continue and are looking at ideas to promote local business (including printing a new town guide for visitors)
- We feel an important role of the TC is to Act as advocates and Fight for our community and we have continuously pushing...
 - ...that Bus services cuts and where necessary services instated
 - ...that we have proper policing in the town now that there is none
 - ...that our schools are funded and resourced properly
 - ...that health services cuts and closures are ended
 - ...that any new building developments in the parish to be appropriate for the needs of local people and be properly resourced

These are ongoing battles in an environment where the government's program of cuts and privatisation of public services continues and they continue to apply pressure on local authorities to meet excessive housing targets. Our resources get reduced every year as Central government has cut local government funding by nearly 50% over the last nine years – we have lost £10,000 this year alone. So to try and maintain and improve our community is not going to get any easier unless things at the top change...

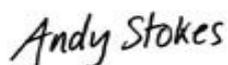
I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the outgoing councillors and those who have been a part of the council over the last 4 years – you have worked so hard and have achieved an incredible amount and you should be very proud. It has been hard work at times and for many of you this is on top of earning a living and raising families.

Thanks to brilliant work of the Town Council staff who work so hard to make sure that things don't fall apart behind the scenes – Judith our clerk whose wealth of experience and commitment are invaluable, Inga who is so capable and handles anything we throw at her and of course Ray.

Thanks also to the Town Hall staff, Clair who has had to deal with fantastic amounts of hassle and has risen so well to it all and Kiki who is hard at work behind the scenes making sure everything is ship-shape.

Thank-you to the new councillors who have volunteered to help make this community a better place to live. We have a great team in place now and I look forward to an even more exciting time over the next 4 years!

Cllr. Andy Stokes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Stokes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

(Chair of Buckfastleigh Town Council/Mayor of Buckfastleigh)