

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held in the Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 22nd May 2019 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillors: Andy Stokes (Chair), Pam Barrett, Huw Cox, Pamela Forbes, Darren Greep, David Patrick and Sylvee Phillips. Cllr Susan Clarke arrived at 7.20 pm.

Press: No representatives of the Press in attendance

In attendance: 1 member of the public

Apologies: Cllrs John Bailey, Ron Fox, Gwena Harman, Kate Kayley and Judith Hart (Town Clerk)

19/24. Introduction and welcome to the Annual Town Meeting:

Councillor Andy Stokes welcomed everyone to the meeting.

19/25. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 18th April 2018:

Signed and approved by Councillor Andy Stokes.

19/26. A review of Town Council activities during the year and a look ahead to future plans by Councillor Andy Stokes, Mayor of Buckfastleigh:

Cllr Stokes presented a summary of Town Council activities over the past year:

- The Hello Summer programme was extended to provide activities not just during the summer school holidays but also arts and crafts activities and parkour for youngsters during the spring and Easter holidays too. This will be developed further this year and into the future thanks to help from Cllr Barrett and 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 use as a basis to obtain funding and work with groups engaged with young people to make Buckfastleigh a safer and better place for our young people.
- We worked and campaigned and will continue to do so with local people and the primary school to try and make our roads safer.
- We held the Heart of Buckfastleigh event to celebrate and promote the work of volunteers in the community.
- We brought back the psychedelic Colourspace to the football field.
- We 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. This year's event in early June is not liable to happen because only one organisation has submitted an entry. The deadline for bids is this week and despite a press release and social media coverage no further entries have materialised.
- We gave away over £8,000 in grants to more than 20 local projects & voluntary groups. We doubled the 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.

- We continued to support Victoria Park and Swimming Pool to ensure it is able to continue to provide this amazing resource for the community – Thanks to Pam Barrett and the trustees of the park for all their incredible work.
- We continued to fund the local Citizens Advice service in the GPs surgery that has raised over £100,000 for local people, for which I thank ex-councillor Linus McCloskey for running it
- We 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. We 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.
- We ran a Christmas lunch in the Town Hall for those who would otherwise be alone or in need on Christmas day, for which we had a whole load of brilliant volunteers.
- We employed our new Town Ranger Ray who has done a magnificent job working to make sure things do not get out of control in the parish – we are lucky to have him.
- We issued a 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 and 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 Town Council is to act as advocates and fight for our community and we have campaigned...that bus service cuts are reinstated ...that we have proper policing in the town now that there is none ...that our schools are funded and resourced properly ...that health service cuts and closures are ended ...that any new building developments in the parish 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 the brilliant work of the Town Council staff who work so hard to make sure that things do not 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!

19/27. Introduction to the role of a Town Councillor:

Cllr Pam Barrett outlined the roles and responsibilities of town councillors:

- Advised to refer to the Good Councillors Guide – previously distributed
- Reminder that dates of meetings are published, apologies to Judith in advance
- Reminder about documents of Declarations of Interest and our responsibility to keep them up to date
- Reminder to raise any interests ahead of any discussions and votes
- Reminder to make appointment with Judith and staff to raise questions
- Councillors roles:
 - Town Council is employer/line management of Town Council Staff
 - Health and Safety and corporate medical, lone worker
 - Judith, Ray, Inga are our staff for which we are responsible
 - Via Town Hall committee, Claire and Kiki also fall under our responsibility (see previous point about separating Town Council and Town Hall)

19/28. Public Question Time: No questions.

Meeting closed at 7.27pm.

Signed.....

Date.....