

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Matters Meeting held in Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 13th November 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors: David Patrick (Acting Chair), Andy Stokes, Pam Barrett, Sue Clarke, Huw Cox, Pamela Forbes, Ron Fox, Kate Kayley and Inga Page (Admin Assistant)

In attendance: 1 member of the public

Press: No Press in attendance

19/67. Apologies: Cllrs John Bailey and Sylvee Phillips.
No apologies received from Cllrs Gwena Harman and Darren Greep.

19/68. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

19/69. Questions and comments from the public: None

19/70. Minutes of the Council Matters Meeting held on 9th October 2019 and review of actions from this meeting:

Signed by Cllr David Patrick

Action:

- Barn Park Housing Development – Clerk to check with residents whether they still wish to contact Dartmoor National Park Authority Members to meet with them about the development.

Agenda item No. 6 moved forward by the Chair.

19/71. To review the new meeting structure which came into effect on 1st April 2019:

Cllr Patrick outlined the structure which has been in place since 1st April and asked for comments.

Cllr Cox said that now there are three meetings per month to attend and there is considerable crossover in terms of content. He would prefer one longer meeting rather than two shorter ones. Could there be some consolidation?

Cllr Barrett: The original idea was to have one decision-making meeting (Town Council) and then other work would be done by committees/project groups and could be more flexible in terms of structure, with referral back to Town Council for approval. It was not intended that all councillors should attend all three meetings each month.

The Buckfastleigh Matters meeting now has a huge agenda each month. If planned ahead on an annual basis, the meetings could be themed and involve non-Council members interested in a particular topic e.g. tourism, sport, youth, wellbeing.

Cllr Cox: Specific tasks could be allocated to small groups/panels.

Cllr Patrick: Could the smaller grant decisions be moved in with the larger grants?

Cllr Barrett: Grants could be decided by town representatives plus a couple of councillors.

Cllr Clarke: New councillors are getting more used to the work and becoming more able to facilitate small groups.

Various councillors suggested moving Council Matters material into the Town Council meeting to have just one monthly meeting which deals with financial and procedural issues.

Cllr Patrick: The meeting format is important. Meetings that have a different format from regular Council meetings e.g. Be Wild and Where Next? had a better turnout and more participation. The Council could use the “Lean Coffee” model for some Buckfastleigh Matters meetings with no agenda issued beforehand and topics agreed at start of meeting.

Action: Cllrs Stokes, Patrick and Clarke to meet with the Clerk to propose a new structure based on this feedback. It is important to remember that no structure is perfect and will need to be regularly reviewed.

19/72. To review new draft Terms of Reference for the Buckfastleigh Matters and Council Matters Committees pending resolution to adopt by full Council:

Cllr Stokes outlined suggested revisions to the draft Terms of Reference which will apply as long as the existing meeting structure continues. He proposed adoption of the new Terms which was seconded by Cllr Cox with all Members in favour.

Decision: Subject to agreed revisions both Terms of Reference adopted.

19/73. Budget Analysis Reports 01.10.19 – 31.10.19: Noted.

19/74. Bank Payments Reports and Bank Statements 01.10.19 – 31.10.19: Noted

19/75. Draft Budget and Precept 2020/21:

Cllr Stokes outlined some of the key features of the draft budget.

- £9,000 was allocated for grants this year. This has been underspent due to lack of applications from local groups and organisations.
- £5,000 was allocated for culture and events this year, of which only £2,000 has been spent so far because the Council has not had capacity to organise more events.
- New budget items include defibrillator maintenance and maintenance of the FROG equipment (river monitoring for flood prevention). The latter was previously funded by Devon County Council, but that money is now running out and responsibility will lie with the Town Council. Cllr Patrick has requested details of costs.

Cllr Barrett: The £5,000 allocated for Wellbeing will be spent on activities which will promote wellbeing, the exact nature of these to be determined. In the Where Next? consultation, the community identified 3 projects they wanted to see developed: a multi-surface games area, mental health support services and a community bus. Council funds can be used to pay for consultations, pilot projects etc. to help these get started.

Cllr Stokes: Some of the surplus money from this year can be ring-fenced specifically for these pilot projects.

Action: Councillors to study the draft budget and bring comments to the next Council Matters meeting.

19/76. To progress the creation of a new and independent board of trustees for the Buckfastleigh Town Hall and Institute:

The plan is to have a separate board of trustees for the Town Hall and this can include 2 or 3 Town Councillors. To date no serious attempt has been made to find new trustees. This will be a challenging role as the building needs a lot of work. Clear selection criteria will be needed.

Action: Clerk to put out a call for trustees and invite them to an initial meeting via an item in the community newsheet, local newspaper, on social media etc.

19/77. Councillor updates regarding matters relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Stokes: The Community Christmas Lunch will take place at the Rill Estate. Members conveyed thanks to Cllr Kayley's parents for this offer. Help would be appreciated in advance and on the day.

Cllr Cox: There is a proposal by Ashburton Town Council and other parishes to share a Parish Lengthsman to clear drains, sweep leaves etc. There are no estimated costs as yet and further information will be brought back in due course.

Cllr Fox: Splendiferous are running an event in the Town Hall and he has been asked to be present at the event to satisfy rental conditions. Is this required? Cllr Fox was advised to speak to the Town Hall Administrator so she can clarify the conditions for this booking which have been applied because of previous experiences with this event. There is no requirement for a councillor to be present.

19/78. Items requiring Urgent Attention:

Cllr Stokes asked Cllr Clarke if she is willing to take over as Chair of Buckfastleigh Matters and she agreed. This was put to a vote and unanimously agreed. Cllr Clarke will be involved in the review of meeting structure.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.