

# **BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Town Council - Council Matters Meeting held remotely due to the Covid-19 Pandemic on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 7.30 pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Andy Stokes (Chair), Pam Barrett, Sue Clarke, Huw Cox, Ron Fox, Darren Greep, Kate Kayley, David Patrick, Sylvee Phillips and Judith Hart (Town Clerk)

**In attendance:** Not applicable

**Press:** Not applicable

**20/112. Apologies:** Cllr John Bailey

Cllrs Pamela Forbes and Gwenna Harman did not attend.

**20/113. Councillors invited to declare any interests:** None

**20/114. Presentation by a representative of Teign Energy Communities:** Deferred

**20/115. Minutes of the Council Matters Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and review of actions from this meeting:**

Deferred for signing due to status of this meeting.

**Actions from this meeting:**

- X38 Stagecoach bus service consultation – draft response to be circulated by Cllr Patrick – pending.
- Clerk to arrange Tourism Forum – forum booked for 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020 cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak, to rearrange later in the year.

**20/116. Minutes of the Council Matters Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and review of actions from this meeting:**

Deferred for signing due to status of this meeting.

**Actions:**

- Annual Town Council Meeting – Clerk to arrange for 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 – cancelled as directed by Government guidance.

**20/117. Questions and comments from the public:** Not applicable

**20/118. Questions to District and County Councillors:** None

**20/119. To approve the Draft Coronavirus Contingency Plan 2020 for the operation of Buckfastleigh Town Council and Town Hall:**

No longer applicable as the Town Hall is now shut

**20/120. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest – planning application 0106/20: Erection of two storey affordable dwelling at 25 Glebelands, Buckfastleigh**

Neutral view

**20/121. Budget Analysis Report 01.02.20 – 29.02.20:** Noted, but unable to sign.

**20/122. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.02.20 – 29.02.20:** Noted, but unable to sign.

**20/123. Review and adopt by resolution the Risk Assessment Management 2020:**

Adopted unanimously.

**20/124. Review and adopt by resolution the Statement of Internal Control 2020:**

Adopted unanimously.

**20/125. Proposal to ring-fence budget and grant allocations from 2019/20 for expenditure in 2020/21 and review Council reserves for resolution by Town Council subject to the end of year audit of accounts:**

Agreed unanimously.

**20/126. Subject to Standing Order 17a) and b) Buckfastleigh Town Council acting in its capacity as custodian trustee to agree and sign by resolution the execution of documents and deeds to surrender the lease of Buckfast Village Hall, Buckfast Road, Buckfast to the Buckfast Abbey Trustees Registered:**

Deferred

**20/127. Chairs announcements:**

Cllr Stokes gave an update concerning the Covid-19 virus.

It was agreed to close the Town Hall and library following government advice. Bookings and attendance have decreased following the outbreak of the coronavirus and no meetings can take place in a public space. Staff will work remotely and support the Town Council led Covid-19 community response. The potential losses and length of the time the Town Hall will be shut cannot be estimated.

The Town Council is setting up a response to recruit and coordinate volunteers to support initiatives to help with self-isolation, social distancing, the impact on the local economy and the closure of schools whilst adhering to safeguarding.

The Food Bank volunteers are an integral part of this response but 60% of these are over 60 years old and both Ashburton and Buckfastleigh have a core body of volunteers many of whom will be self-isolating.

Town Council and Town Hall staff will be deployed to undertake key tasks and only critical Council and Town Hall work will continue. The Council will be working in partnership with the staff of St. Luke's Church and Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Community Care. Buckfastleigh Medical Centre and the school have also been approached. A variety of tasks will be needed including food and prescription deliveries, befriending calls and driving. Staff and volunteers are already aware of an immediate need and a helpline has been set up to this effect. A process of procedures, protocol and training is required with specialisms identified for each group.

Cllr Greep: How does this response fit in with initiatives at District, County and National level?

Cllr Cox: The NHS have identified 1.4 million people who are assessed as in need and they will be given priority. Hospital beds will be cleared to free up space so recovery will be at home.

Cllr Stokes: The Council is currently awaiting a response from the Medical Centre.

It was acknowledged that frontline staff and volunteers will need support as this response will be needed for an indefinite period.

Cllr Greep was asked to create a list of local trades people to meet the basic needs of day to day life such as a burst tap, but ensuring that they can work safely in a house by minimising the risk of spreading the virus.

There is not enough PPE equipment available to protect people and less key workers such as NHS staff and the police due to self-isolating.

Cllr Stokes proposed that the Town Council ring-fences £20,000 to help with this emergency by using the underspend, budgets which may not be used in the coming months and sourcing grant funding.

The Clerk already has delegated powers to spend up £2,000 and anything over this can be authorised remotely by two of the signatories in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. Normally this process would be required to go to full Council, but it was agreed the Clerk would oversee his process.

**Decision:** Proposal to ring-fence £20,000 approved unanimously.

Cllr Patrick raised concerns about the numerous channels of communication which are circulating.

Cllr Stokes has set up WhatsApp groups specific to the community response team and Town Council and Town Hall staff and that Zoom will only be used for meetings.

Coordinators are being identified and a list of volunteers collated, but training will be needed which will commence with two Food Bank training sessions.

Other initiatives are also being looked at such as activities for those who are self-isolating, a YouTube channel, chat groups, keeping children connected to the community etc.

Cllr Greep advised that the sports field will be available for exercise and dog walking, but a code will be given to users to open the gate which will remain locked.

The National Trust has opened the gardens to their properties for free. The church is waiting for guidance concerning church services, weddings, and funerals.

**20/128. Councillor updates regarding matters relevant to this meeting:**

Deferred

**20/129. Items requiring Urgent Attention:**

Discussed under Minute No. 20/127.

**20/130. Summary of Key Messages:**

Not applicable

**20/131. Motion to move into Part II (private) session to discuss an item of confidential business in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:**

Deferred

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.