

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting using the remote meeting service Zoom held on Wednesday 16th September 2020 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: Andy Stokes (Chair), Pam Barrett, Ron Fox, Huw Cox, Gwena Harman, David Patrick, Darren Greep, Sue Clarke, John Bailey and Judith Hart (Town Clerk)

In attendance: Cllrs Sarah Parker Khan and John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council), Kerry McCabe (TRAYE), Bryony Tilsley (Dartmoor Skies), Sheila Phillips (William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust), Su Maddock (Be Buckfastleigh), and 2 members of the public

Press: None

20/91. Election of Chair following resignation:

Cllr Stokes has resigned as the Chair. He was thanked for all his tireless work and commitment to the Council and the town.

The Clerk asked for nominations for the position of Chair and Mayor of Buckfastleigh. Cllr Patrick nominated Cllr Sue Clarke and this was seconded by Cllr Barrett. Following no further nominations all Members present voted in favour except for Cllr Cox who abstained. Cllr Clarke accepted the position.

20/92. Apologies: Cllr Kate Kayley and Rev. Tom Benson. No apologies from Cllr Phillips

As Rev Benson was unable to attend this meeting for the Part II item under Agenda No.25 this was deferred to the next meeting.

20/93. Councillors invited to declare any interests:

Cllr Barrett declared an interest in Agenda No. 10 - grant application for Be Buckfastleigh.

20/94. To approve and sign the minutes from the Town Council meeting held on 12th August 2020 and review actions from this meeting:

Minutes signed by Cllr Clarke

Cllr Barrett took over the meeting as Deputy Chair due to unforeseen technical issues.

Actions from this meeting:

- Cllr Sarah Parker Khan, following an enquiry by Cllr Stokes, confirmed that there are no kerbside Tetrapak collections in Teignbridge because there is no storage facility or space to facilitate the separation of material. The Town Council can nevertheless lobby Teignbridge District Council (TDC) to look into this.

20/95. Items requiring Urgent Attention:

Agenda Item No 23 Items requiring Urgent Attention was brought forward by the Deputy Chair to agree the Website Accessibility Statement drafted by Cllrs Patrick and Stokes to ensure that the Town Council is compliant with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018. The website must have clear text and images for assisted users and a statement published on the

website by 23 September 2020 to demonstrate what is compliant and what will be addressed. To avoid the cost of a new website Cllr Stokes and Inga Page will attend webinar training.

Decision: Resolved. Cllr Fox abstained due to technical issues.

20/96. Update by TRAYE on the Buckfastleigh Youth Well-Being Café:

Kerry McCabe, TRAYE Project Lead (Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement Project) gave an introduction to the Buckfastleigh virtual youth café for 11 to 18-year olds which is run by experienced youth work professionals. It is hoped to have a face to face café when COVID restrictions end.

The project for Buckfastleigh commenced on 3rd June 2020 and is a pilot project for 6 months. Sessions include lockdown packs, detached and outreach work when lockdown measures eased, Zoom meetings with young people, a Facebook page to display work such as crafts, photography and competitions. Topics covered include mental health and well-being, bullying, goal setting, and self-care. Since 10th June there have been 10 Zoom cafes, 10 lockdown packs sent to 140 individuals and 4 outreach sessions.

48 young people are engaged with the youth café, 22 of which had previously attended youth provision in the town and have missed the social interaction. 26 of the attendees do not currently access any clubs or activities. Individuals have expressed shyness, anxiety, and low mood which has been exacerbated by the lockdown.

The pilot project is due to finish on 9 December 2020. A questionnaire using Survey Monkey will be sent to the 48 attendees to obtain feedback.

Cllr Barrett thanked Kerry for her interim report and confirmed that Cllr Clarke is leading on the youth strategy.

20/97. Questions and comments from the public: None

20/98. Questions to District and County Councillors:

Cllr Parker Khan gave an update on the questions about air quality raised at the previous meeting. On an air pollution map of the UK, Dean Prior, adjacent to the A38, was identified as a high-risk spot. Historically, Environmental Health used to monitor this area but concluded that there were no significant readings and no residential properties affected but TDC will look at specific spots if asked by Town Council.

Cllr Bailey: Clearly there are residences in the area identified.

Cllr Barrett suggested that this is also raised with South Hams councillors. Pollution does not stay in one place and she would like a reading taken near Whitecleave Quarry and the border shared with South Hams by the A38.

Cllr Stokes also highlighted concerns about the Chapel St./Market St area where smog can linger.

Cllr Parker Khan: Environmental Health officials believe that the dispersal rate is high.

Action: Clerk to raise this matter with the Environmental Health Department and request air quality monitoring at the locations identified.

20/99. Budget Analysis Report 01.08.20 – 31.08.20: Noted

Cllr Clarke asked about defibrillator monitoring. The Clerk confirmed that the Town Ranger undertakes regular checks and reporting for the equipment located opposite the Coop and the Fire Service monitor the other 3 units within the parish.

20/100. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.08.20 – 31.08.20: Noted

20/101. Smaller Grant Applications:

The following organisations were awarded grants:

- i) William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust £500 - new staircase to link the route around the quarry site
- ii) Participate Arts CIC £480 - winter well-being activities

Cllr Barrett abstained from voting for both items.

Cllr Cox abstained from voting for item ii)

Cllr Nutley suggested that funding is also available from District and County Councillors and was asked to publicise this to the community.

The Clerk gave an update on the grant budgets for the current financial year.

20/102. Larger Grant Applications:

Bryony Tilsley presented the Dartmoor Skies application for £770 for a craft pack and astronomy guide for a month-long star-gazing activity, either online or in person. Cllr Clarke commented on inclusion of females in science-based activities, access by lower income families to activities and use of a local venue.

Su Maddock explained the Be Buckfastleigh grant application for £5,000 and the purpose of the premises at The Living Room which provides a whole range of social, health and well-being activities to the community under the Be Wild, Be Healthy and Be Well projects. Be Buckfastleigh will soon become a Community Interest Company having now become a new independent organisation and funds are needed to purchase IT equipment, office stationery, contribute towards the costs of a fund-raiser, website designer and governance training.

Cllr Patrick highlighted the lack of funds in the Larger Grants budget and that no accounts have been provided to support this application. It was confirmed that the new bank account has been delayed due to the transition from the Active Well-Being Society to Be Buckfastleigh. The Town Council is hosting the account for the time-being which is why no accounts are available.

Bryony Tilsley and Su Maddock left the meeting at 8.33 pm.

Cllr Greep said there was confusion between Hello Summer, Be Buckfastleigh and Participate Arts. Cllr Barrett explained the separation and who delivers what to the community.

Members agreed that unspent funds in the Town Council budget should be spent on the community and that funding for the Larger Grants could be sought from other sources. Both applications went to a vote.

Cllr Barrett abstained from voting on both items and Cllr Cox abstained from voting on the Be Buckfastleigh grant application and sourcing funds from underspent budgets.

Decision: Both applications approved and it was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Stokes review current underspends to meet the shortfall in the Larger Grant fund.

20/103. Buckfastleigh Response Update:

Cllr Stokes reported that the response line is still active, but volunteers have stood down. It is anticipated that there will be a surge in helpline demand at the end of furlough, especially for the Food Bank. Volunteers are gearing up for a second phase.

Regular users have been identified and continue to be supported and others invited if help is needed. A message is going out concerning food poverty. The group continue to work with the Medical Centre and are also looking at provision for Christmas.

A structure is now in place to provide an effective and quick response, so we are prepared for the future.

20/104. To agree the future of virtual Town Council meetings, frequency of meetings and dates:

There has been some support for hybrid meetings, but this is difficult to manage and it was suggested that the Town Council continues to use Zoom to host all meetings although this is dependent upon an efficient IT connection. Live streaming meetings on Facebook could also be used if it encourages more engagement with residents.

It was highlighted that not everyone has access to the internet

Action: Cllr Stokes proposed that the monthly virtual meetings continue and to explore other options. Seconded by Cllr Barrett with all Members in favour.

20/105. Cooption of a new Town Councillor:

Cllr Stokes and the Clerk explained the co-option process when a vacancy occurs, and no election is called by the electorate. Applicants are invited to complete an informal letter, Qualification to Hold Office and attend an informal interview prior to co-option by full Council. The closing date for applications is Friday 18th September.

Decision: Cllrs Clarke, Stokes and Harman to meet with new applicants and make recommendations to the next meeting. Clerk to arrange.

Cllr Nutley left the meeting at 9.04 pm

20/106. New programme of community training:

In the absence of Cllr Kayley this item was deferred to the October Town Council meeting.

20/107. Response to the new planning consultation - Planning for the future – proposals for reform of the planning system in England:

Cllr Patrick declared an interest that he cannot contribute to the consultation

Action: Cllrs Stokes and Clarke to draft a response

Cllr Parker Khan: TDC is examining this consultation on 24th September.

20/108. Proposal to call a motion regarding Flood Management in the parish of Buckfastleigh:

The following proposal submitted to this meeting by Cllr Barrett was read out by the Clerk:

Proposal to call a motion to call on the Environment Agency, Devon County Council and Dartmoor National Park to work together to take all necessary actions and measures to reduce run off from surrounding land, improve water retention and storage upstream, reduce soil compaction and restore peat bogs, clear and effectively manage drains and gullies, to protect Buckfastleigh properties from the impact of surface water flooding, protect the our rivers water quality and biodiversity and protect soil quality.

A member of the public living on Market Street has witnessed flash flooding where surface water runoff from different directions meets. This is compounded by poorly maintained drains, soil compaction and hard surfaces which creates pools of water around the approach to his property. He has now had to put his own flood mitigation measures in place and is concerned about the vulnerability of the electricity substation in this area. High levels of investment are not needed to alleviate this problem.

Cllr Clarke: There are significant concerns regarding the lack of maintenance by Devon Highways.

Second member of the public: *What is the response of the authorities?*

Cllr Barrett: The Environment Agency have classed the land above the town as nonporous and as hard as concrete. There needs to be a joint approach by the responsible bodies.

Cllr Cox: Roads continue to deteriorate, and the drains are blocking with gravel.

Cllr Stokes: How will the Town Council publicise this and what do we hope to achieve by this motion?

Cllr Barrett: The relevant bodies have never been asked to have a joined-up approach, so it is proposed that the Town Council makes a formal request. Dartmoor National Park have been working on land management issues, but this is dependent upon the cooperation of the landowners.

Decision: Cllr Stokes seconded the motion with all Members in agreement. Cllr Barrett and the Clerk to work together on communication to this effect.

20/109. Maintenance of the Stockabrook Leat, Plymouth Road, Buckfastleigh:

No ownership of the leat has been established. Water extraction rights belonged to the mill that used to be at Woodholme Car Park which is now owned by TDC. Landowners have no riparian duties and there is no liability for environmental impact or the protection of habitat for certain species.

Plymouth Road householders have taken some responsibility adjacent to Bossell Road, but they have no legal duty to clear the vegetation which is too much to accommodate in their green bins. The Town Ranger clears the sluice gate adjacent to Whitecleave quarry but as he only works 10 hours per week this is not undertaken weekly.

Previously householders have contributed to the cost of the clearance but with a change of residents over time this has ceased.

Decision: Members agreed that the Town Council cannot assume responsibility for the leat and it was suggested that residents set up a community group. Clerk to discuss further with Cllr Barrett and send a response to the resident who raised this matter.

20/110. Town Ranger's Equipment CCTV Report:

The Town Ranger circulated a report on the condition of the five redundant CCTV cameras.

Decision: The Clerk to work with the Ranger to source quotes for approved electrical contractors to safely decommission the Town Council owned CCTV cameras around the town centre.

20/111. Sale of surplus donated solar panels:

Members thanked Cllr Stokes and Inga Page for organising the sale and removal of the solar panels.

20/112. Forward planning to 2021:

Members will look at feedback from councillor surgeries and the online questionnaire which will be publicised shortly. Initial budget discussion to take place at the October meeting.

20/113. Chairs announcements: None

20/114. Councillor updates regarding matters relevant to this meeting: No further matters to report

20/115. Items requiring Urgent Attention: No further items

20/116. Summary of Key Messages:

Clerk to liaise with Cllr Clarke

20/117. Part II (Private session)

Deferred to the October meeting

The meeting returned to Part I and closed at 9.40 pm.