

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting using the remote meeting service Zoom held on Wednesday 2nd December 2020 at 7.00pm.

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

In attendance: Cllr Sarah Parker Khan (Teignbridge District Council) and Tim Dollimore (The Media Workshop) and 1 member of the public

Press: None

20/153. Apologies: Cllr Gwena Harman

20/154. Councillors invited to declare any interests: Cllr Darren Greep declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 8 – Smaller Grant Application.

20/155. To approve and sign the minutes from the Town Council meeting held on 4th November 2020 and review actions from this meeting:

Minutes signed by Cllr Clarke

Actions from this meeting:

- 20/124. (4th November meeting minute) Buckfastleigh and Buckfast Verge Management Plan – Clerk to arrange a meeting.
- 20/135. (4th November meeting minute) Buckfast Abbey Lower Mills planning application - Execution of documents and deeds to surrender the lease of Buckfast Village Hall by the Town Council – following attendance by Cllrs Stokes and Cox at the planning authority Development Management Committee, Members resolved for the said documents to be signed accordingly.
- 20/145. Community Christmas Event update - to be discussed under Agenda No. 11
- 20/146. Teignbridge Rural Covid Impact survey – Clerk confirmed that this had been completed and submitted.

20/156. Questions and comments from the public:

Member of public in attendance to address the Town Council under Agenda item No. 9. Barn Park Gas Explosion Emergency Fund.

20/157. Questions to District and County Councillors:

Cllr Sarah Parker Khan advised that Teignbridge District Council (TDC) have proposed to relax trading hours over the Christmas period, but this will be monitored due to the potential noise disruption to neighbouring properties.

The 15,000-tree planting target within the district has been reached and a further 15,000 trees will be planted over the next two winters. Cllr Cox also confirmed that private contractors and landowners have pledged to plant more trees.

Cllr Barrett asked that it is made clear that Teignbridge CVS is not facilitating all the Food Banks operating in the district as implied by the South Devon Food link and that some Food Banks such as Buckfastleigh are self-funded. The link is not clear as to where Go Fund Me funding is being distributed.

TDC have carried out a refuse collection survey and found that 45% of rubbish found in the black bins could have been recycled. Information to residents will be published to this effect.

20/158. Budget Analysis Report 01.10.20 – 31.10.20: Noted

20/159. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.10.20 – 31.10.20: Noted

20/160. Quarterly Bank Reconciliation: Noted

20/161. Smaller Grant Application:

Buckfastleigh Cricket Club was awarded £500 for the purchase of new equipment.

20/162. To discuss and agree expenditure of remaining funds in the Barn Park Gas Explosion Emergency Fund:

Decision: Members agreed that following regular communication with the three residents who were affected by the gas explosion, the remaining Go Fund Me funds administered by the Town Council should be split equally as directed in recent correspondence.

Tim Dollimore joined the meeting at 7.30pm

20/163. Notification of termination of the Buckfastleigh Rural Skip Service:

The rural skip service has been a vital community facility for Buckfastleigh for many years, but this has been withdrawn by TDC. It was suggested that the Town Council seeks an alternative provider who can provide at least one annual collection or smaller more frequent collections of bulky household waste. A review panel would be needed to assess whether this would be feasible and affordable.

Action: Clerk to research further and draft a tender inviting local providers to apply in the New Year. Tenders will be reviewed by a selection panel and applications that meet the criteria will be considered at this meeting under confidential business.

It was noted that the proposal to provide a community composting facility is still ongoing and that Be Wild would be interested in joining this discussion.

TDC are again providing a free Christmas tree recycling collection in several communities but Buckfastleigh has been excluded.

Action: Clerk to raise this matter with TDC.

20/164. Community Christmas Event Update:

The Town Council has commissioned The Media Workshop to create an imaginative lights projection event which will include designs by Buckfastleigh Primary School pupils from 18th to 20th December in partnership with Window Wanderland facilitated by Participate Arts.

A site visit has been carried out at the Town Hall where the display will be projected onto the front elevation of the school. Advertising and a risk assessment and will shortly be undertaken

and volunteer marshals will be needed to safely direct the public through the school playground using a one-way system.

20/165. Buckfastleigh Response Update:

Be Buckfastleigh will be providing free packed lunches to children during the Christmas school holiday.

Inga is coordinating delivery of the Christmas meals and Judith is organising food treat bags to accompany Food Bank food parcels, the Christmas meals and children's Christmas activity packs. Christmas presents will also be delivered to children from families who are struggling.

Cllr Stokes advised that there are currently a low number of calls for the emergency response service so volunteers have stood down for the time being with Tom and Laura at St. Luke's Church taking calls.

Thanks, was conveyed to Riverford Field Kitchen who are providing 70 free meals each week to Be Buckfastleigh and the Food Bank. There is however concern that some residents who are having financial difficulties are not using the Food Bank and should be encouraged to do so and use what money they have saved to spend on fuel. It was emphasised that the Food Bank is well supplied with good quality food which is available to all those who are in need.

Action: To promote in the key messages for this meeting.

20/166. Chair's Announcements: None

20/167. Councillor updates regarding matters relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Stokes had circulated notes regarding the precept and budget for 2021/22. In recent years the precept has been increased by the Town Council in line with inflation but due to the current economic climate this has dropped. The TDC tax base used for calculating the precept has also been reduced due to less Council Tax being collected and more people in receipt of Council Tax benefit. If the Town Council chooses the second option to freeze the precept for 2021/22 over £6,000 will be lost from the budget but in order to keep the same level of precept as the current year it would need to be increased. The long-term effects of Covid-19 and Brexit are also not known.

Cllr Barrett highlighted that any reduction in the budget will reduce the current level of service provided by the Town Council and normally there would be a community consultation process earlier in the year to determine what services continue and what new services can be delivered. Demand for well-being initiatives will undoubtedly increase with the current situation.

The third option is to reduce the precept, but this would have a significant impact on the Town Council.

There is also the opportunity to undertake an asset transfer from TDC with the Duckspend playing field area, but this would incur significant costs to achieve.

Cllr Stokes referred to the replacement of the public benches in Fore Street with benches that are designed and made locally. The Council could seek sponsorship from local businesses. It was agreed that this could be an item for a future meeting.

Cllrs Cox and Bailey have visited the Salmon Leap weir on the river Dart following concerns from the community about its dilapidated condition and potential risk for flooding. The weir has previously been assessed for use in a hydropower scheme, but this was found not to be viable.

It is understood that the weir is privately owned, and repair would be the responsibility of the landowner. The Environment Agency are aware of the condition of the weir but have not taken any further action.

Action: Clerk to write to the landowner to raise the concerns of the community and highlight the potential risk of flooding and hazards to river users.

It was noted that new drains and associated works have been carried out on Old Totnes Road and that some drain and gully cleaning has also taken place. Wallaford Road has been cleared, but several drains remain blocked.

The Clerk is waiting for a response from the relevant agencies regarding a joined-up approach to flood initiatives in the town which will be brought back to this meeting.

Cllr Patrick advised that the faulty floodwater gauge and camera on the river Mardle requires replacement which will cost £5,000. Devon County Council are willing to match fund. Cllr Patrick to discuss further and report back to this meeting.

Overnight repair works to the A38 flyover will be undertaken this month with a diversion running along Plymouth Road, Strode Road and Dart Bridge Road.

Action: To advertise on social media.

Cllr Clarke attended a brief ceremony due to Covid-19 restrictions at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

Cllr Barrett was sad to report that there had been a fire fatality in the town which again emphasises the need for the town to continue to retain its own dedicated fire service.

The Chamber of Trade were again thanked for their excellent Christmas lights display in the centre of town.

20/168. Items requiring Urgent Attention: None

20/169. Summary of Key Messages:

Clerk to liaise with the Chair.

The meeting closed at 8.47 pm.