BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting using the remote meeting service Zoom held on Wednesday 3rd February 2021 at 7.00pm.

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

**In attendance:**  Cllrs Sarah Parker Khan and John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council), Eddie Brown (Head Teacher at Buckfastleigh Primary School), David Harbott (Buckfastleigh Swift Project) and 1 member of the public

Press: None

21/217. Apologies: Cllr Kate Kayley

No apologies received from Cllr Gwena Harman

21/218. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

21/219. To discuss the interim appointment of a Deputy Chair and Mayor:

The Chair conveyed her thanks to Pam Barrett following her recent resignation from the Town Council as Councillor, Deputy Chair and Mayor. Pam had served the Town Council for almost 6 years during which time she had made a significant and positive impact on the town and successfully secured a considerable amount of funding.

Cllr Stokes added that Pam had found numerous ways of working with the community who together with the Town Council owe Pam a huge debt of gratitude.

Judith also conveyed her thanks to Pam for encouraging her to undertake and complete the Clerk’s qualification which has enabled both her and the Council to broaden its knowledge and responsibilities.

Cllr Erin Kohler-Ockmore was nominated by Cllr Sue Clarke which was seconded by Cllr Andy Stokes with all Members in agreement. With no further nominations Cllr Kohler-Ockmore was duly appointed as the new Deputy Chair and Mayor.

21/220. To consider a request for funding towards the Buckfastleigh Primary School Wellbeing Project:

Eddie Brown explained that the outside space at the school which had in previous years been developed as a nature and growing area for the children, is not being used to its full potential due to other commitments within the school. The school are therefore seeking funding to employ someone to work for 10 hours per week on a 38-week basis to develop and enhance this space in partnership with the children and volunteers.

There is currently no funding available for this type of project as priorities have changed and pupil numbers have decreased. Friends of Buckfastleigh Primary School have in the past supported this type of initiative but due to covid restrictions no fund raising has taken place although alternative funding streams will be looked at.

It was suggested that the school could apply to the Town Council for a perennial grant if the project needs long-term funding or that the Community Development Fund could be used to engage a dedicated fund raiser. Funding may also be available as part of a joint cross intergenerational initiative to help combat isolation within the community.

Cllr Clarke agreed that it is important for the children to interact with nature, plant and grow food and that she would be pleased to donate the Mayor’s fund for this purpose.

Decision: Cllr Clarke proposed that the Town Council funds £2,000 towards this project which includes the £500 Mayor’s Fund and the engagement of a fund raiser using the Community Development Fund which was seconded by Cllr Stokes with all Members in favour subject to Eddie providing more detailed costs.

21/221. To approve and sign the minutes from the Town Council meeting held on 20th January 2021 and review actions from this meeting:

Minutes signed by Cllr Clarke.

**Actions from this meeting:**

* 21/204. Town Clock update – Cllr Bailey confirmed that a local clock company will be looking at the clock to see if it can be repaired and that he would fund replacement non- ferrous brackets to prevent rust marks to the external wall of Searles electrical shop where the clock is mounted.
* 21/211. Decommissioning of CCTV update – Cllr Cox confirmed that he had spoken to Contractor A who had provided a less expensive quote (£830 + VAT) to remove all the Town Council owned external CCTV to clarify some outstanding questions. He proposed that the Council proceeds with this quote which was seconded by Cllr John Bailey with all Members in agreement. Clerk to action.

**21/222. Questions and comments from the public:**

David Harbott is concerned that the swift boxes attached to the Town Hall in 2020 were not occupied during the breeding season and that they may need to be re-located to a more suitable site on the building. He suggested that the Councillors/Trustees may wish to consider an alternative proposal to allow the swifts to nest within the roof space.

It was noted that birds have been trapped in the Town Hall, in particular Jackdaws and that access to the front elevation has now been blocked with wire mesh. It was agreed that the birds should not have free range of the loft space above the Main Hall, but a retained area could be looked at.

**Actions:** David to provide a written proposal to this meeting and Cllr Cox offered to seek further advice from the RSPB.

21/223. Questions to District and County Councillors:

Cllrs Cox and Parker Khan advised that there may be some interest from Ashburton Town Council and the surrounding parishes to join the rural skip/bulky waste collection service initiated by the Town Council to replace the service withdrawn by Teignbridge District Council.

Action: Inga to organise a combined working group with Ashburton and other interested parishes and to include Cllrs Clarke, Cox, Patrick and Greep.

Cllr Parker Khan confirmed that reported Covid-19 cases have decreased in the Teignbridge area and that there are vaccination centres in Exeter, Newton Abbot and St Boniface House, Buckfastleigh.

**21/224. Smaller Grant Applications:**

The following organisations were awarded grants:

1. Participate Arts CIC £500 - winter well-being arts & craft packs
2. Nurture £500 – Town Hall room hire & expenses
3. 1st Buckfastleigh Scouts Group £500 – tents for summer camp
4. Wildspace Garden £500 – artwork for wildlife garden
5. Chamber of Trade £500 – Christmas lights display

Cllrs Cox and Phillips abstained from voting for item i)

A further grant application was received on behalf of the Chamber of Trade to request funding for some new town bunting for the town centre. Members agreed that although they support this initiative the following options were given:

• Councillor Nutley of Ashburton Town Council offered to donate a large quantity of waterproof bunting which is surplus to requirements. • Councillor Cox also has some flags which have previously been used and attach to the existing Christmas tree brackets. • The application did not contain enough information regarding the cost and source of the bunting for eg. using a local supplier if possible and obtaining value for money. If further research can be undertaken and evidence of costs provided, the Town Council would consider the resubmission of an amended application to the next meeting. • A further suggestion would be to encourage a community arts project where residents and business owners could design, make and hang their own bunting in their windows during the summer season in addition to the town bunting.

21/225. Chair’s Announcements:

Cllr Clarke advised the meeting that Gary Quest the new Town Ranger would be starting his new post on Monday 8th February.

21/226. Councillor updates regarding matters relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Stokes advised that no election has been called for the vacant seat on the Town Council and that the Council may now advertise to co-opt to fill the position. A delegated panel of Cllrs will be arranged to interview candidates when the deadline for applications has been reached.

Cllr Stokes would like the Council to respond to the Devon Carbon Plan and would encourage individual responses too.

Cllr Patrick explained that a new CCTV camera has been installed by the Environment Agency to monitor the trash screen located in Kingcombe Court.

He was also pleased to report that he had received a good response and helpful ideas from the canoeing club that regularly use the river Dart including the request for provision of facilities

and better access from the river. Previously the Salmon Leap café had been a regular stop, and this stretch of the Dart is very popular with canoeists and kayakers. They are aware of the dangers in and around the collapsing weir so they avoid that area but would like to see it made safe and provide access for the fish. They also agreed to attend a meeting to discuss further.

The Environment Agency have confirmed that the long-term plan for the weir is to let it degrade naturally.

Action: Cllr Patrick to screenshot the comments provided by the canoeists and circulate to the Cllrs.

Cllr Cox advised that the trees that have suffered from storm damage on the Millennium Green including some fruit trees will be replaced. He is also replanting a native hedgerow with a conservation mix of plants to the side of his property that adjoins the steps to Holy Trinity Church.

Cllr Bailey reiterated that Searles electric shop are happy to continue to host the Town Clock on the outside of their premises as long as it is repaired or replaced and attached to wall brackets that do not rust.

A new company will be removing the clock to see if it can be repaired or needs replacement, but he is waiting for a price for the removal and inspection. Cllr Bailey kindly offered to cover the cost of new non-ferrous brackets.

It was noted that Plymouth Road/Strode Road and Dart Bridge Road will be used as a diversion while roadworks are carried out on the A38.

Action: Clerk to consult with Devon County Council and the Highways Agency regarding warning signs to alert road users that they have entered a residential area with a 40mph speed restriction and to slow down.

21/227. Items requiring Urgent Attention: None

21/228. Summary of Key Messages:

Clerk to liaise with the Chair.

Cllrs Parker Khan and Nutley and the public left the meeting at 8.35pm

The Chair moved the meeting into a Part II session to discuss two items of confidential business.

**21/229. Part II (private session)**

The meeting returned to Part I and closed at 8.55pm.