

# BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

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## **Minutes of the Town Council Meeting using the remote meeting service Zoom held on Wednesday 21st April 2021 at 7.00pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Sue Clarke (Chair), Erin Kohler-Ockmore, Andy Stokes, David Patrick, Ron Fox, Huw Cox, Sylvee Phillips, Kate Kayley, and Judith Hart (Town Clerk). Darren Greep arrived at 7.17 pm.

**In attendance:** Cllrs Sarah Parker Khan and John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council) and Mark Jeffreys

Press: None

**21/19. Apologies:** Cllrs John Bailey and Bryony Tilsley

No apologies received from Cllr Gwena Harman

**21/20. Councillors invited to declare any interests:** None

**21/21. To approve and sign the minutes from the Town Council meeting held on 7th April 2021 and review actions from this meeting:**

Minutes signed by Cllr Clarke

### **Actions from this meeting:**

- 21/07. Teignbridge District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2021- comments from the Town Council have been noted but due to the timescale of receiving the documents and the timing of meetings it was not possible to meet the deadline set by Teignbridge District Council.
- 21/10. Councillor updates regarding matters relevant to this meeting – Tourism meeting arranged for 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

**21/22. Questions and comments from the public:**

Mark Jeffreys: Referred to a support group in Dartington for young people – The Glade – Woods for Wellness programme. Funding had originally been received from the COVID-19 Lottery fund for a parents of teenagers group which he is helping to run, but this has now ceased. He is asking if this group could be facilitated in Buckfastleigh and for donations? Cllr Clarke suggested applying for a Town Council grant.

An outdoor venue is needed preferably with a firepit or an indoor venue could be used. Parents of teenagers is a listening support group e.g. for parents with children who have eating disorders. Sessions are held in both the afternoon and evening and are booked for the next 3 months.

Cllr Kohler-Ockmore: The group would need a suitable outdoor venue in Buckfastleigh and how many people attend?

Mark Jeffreys would like to host it here. 8 parents generally meet for this group but there is up to 20 in some of the other groups. He is promoting the parents of teenagers group.

Cllr Stokes: The Town Council would be interested in receiving a grant application for this.

Cllr Clarke: Parents often form their own support links as this type of group is frequently over-subscribed

**21/23. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to this meeting:**

Cllr Parker Khan: Not much is happening at District level due to the current period of purdah pending the upcoming Devon County Council (DCC) election. Restart grants for non-essential retail, leisure etc. are now open, but those who have already received the maximum subsidy cannot apply. Grants will vary depending on the size of business.

Cllr Cox reported that the Teignbridge District Council (TDC) Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met, and he will forward the new Teignbridge Housing Strategy document to the Clerk to circulate. The strategy includes the requirement to undertake new Housing Needs Assessments which have not been carried out for some time.

Cllr Phillips: Cllr Barker is retiring from DCC and as Chair and that some recognition for what he has done for the town during his long period of public service should be recognised.

Cllr Stokes suggested that Cllr Phillips brings a proposal to the next meeting.

**21/24. Budget Analysis Report 01.03.21 – 31.03.21:** Approved

**21/25. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.03.21 – 31.03.21:** Approved

**21/26. Multi-Pay Card Statements February 2021 to March 2021:** Approved

**21/27. Draft End of Years Accounts and Bank Balances 2020/21:**

Approved. The Clerk was thanked for her work on the year end accounts.

**21/28. To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21:**

**Action:** Members unanimously approved the Annual Governance Statement which was signed by the Chair and Clerk.

**21/29. To approve a retrospective agreement between Buckfastleigh Town Council and Be Buckfastleigh:**

**Decision:** All Members in favour. Cllr Huw Cox abstained.

**21/30. Chair's Announcements:** No matters to report.

**21/31. Councillor updates regarding matters relevant to this meeting:**

Cllr Patrick advised the meeting that a planning application had been received for the repair of the existing fish and eel ladder in the river Dart. The Council will support this application.

Cllr Kohler-Ockmore had attended the launch of Buckfastleigh Verge Management project which is supported by the Town Council on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and that Inga will be publicising an article to this effect.

**21/32. Items requiring Urgent Attention:**

Cllr Stokes reported that the coronavirus legislation that permits local councils to hold online meetings will cease from Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021. With a prediction of a third wave in the summer

due to other variants and the ongoing delivery of the vaccination programme, this decision may be in breach of the Disability Act and will make face to face meeting attendance hard for carers. Virtual meetings are more accessible. He proposed that face to face meetings are delayed until at least 21<sup>st</sup> June in line with the government roadmap for easing lockdown measures. He would like to see new legislation that permits hybrid meetings and supports the objections made by NALC to delay this decision.

Cllr Cox confirmed that the Local Government Association and other organisations are also challenging this in court and are awaiting a decision.

**Action:** Members agreed that the Council should not hurry back to in-person meetings and await the court decision pending a review at the next meeting. All in favour.

Cllr Parker Khan agreed that local councils should have the ability to opt for a hybrid model and have held virtual meetings successfully over the last year. TDC cannot socially distance with 47 members.

Cllr Nutley: Many Councillors have also not had their vaccinations.

Cllr Stokes: Our primary responsibility is to our residents and their wellbeing.

Cllr Cox advised Members that if the Council continues to use Zoom decisions made after 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 could be invalid.

Cllr Kohler-Ockmore: We would not be setting an example by telling people to socially distance and it is difficult to do this in a face to face meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that the Minister's letter is unclear.

Cllr Clarke highlighted the recent thefts of catalytic converters and that she has asked the police to provide a covert capture car in the town. She has also made enquiries about the recent incident concerning alleged violent behaviour from a young person to random individuals and criminal damage to parked cars.

Cllr Clarke attended the Bungalow Youth Project AGM and has been invited to attend one of their youth sessions. The project now facilitates a breakout room for the young people who attend and is looking at providing mental health support.

### **21/33. Summary of Key Messages:**

Clerk to liaise with the Chair.

The meeting closed at 8.31 pm.