

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held at Buckfastleigh Town Hall on Wednesday 15th December 2021 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: Sue Clarke (Chair), Erin Kohler-Ockmore, John Bailey, Huw Cox, David Patrick, Sylvee Phillips, Darren Greep, Kathy Taylor, and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

In attendance: 1 member of the public

Press: None

21/178. Apologies: Councillors Bryony Tilsley and Andy Stokes

No apologies received from Cllr Ron Fox

21/179. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

21/180. To approve and sign the minutes from the Town Council Meeting held on 17th November 2021 and review actions from this meeting:

Minutes signed by Cllr Clarke

Actions from the Town Council Meeting:

- Minute No. 21/151 - Restoration and use of the West End telephone box – suggestion to be used as an information point - agreed
- Minute No. 21/152 – Replacement Town Clock update – estimated installation in the second week of January.
- Minute No. 21/164 – Remove Action. Cllr Clarke has not had the opportunity to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet with Pam Barrett as yet.
- Minute No. 21/167 – Deferred
- Minute No. 21/168 – Cllr Clarke has contacted the Fire Station and is awaiting further communication.

Cllr Patrick: Devon Resilience Forum have offered training around community emergencies, the management and training of volunteers, flood preparation etc. Council to look at this in 2022 depending on the Covid situation.

- Minute No. 21/169 – Cllr Kohler-Ockmore: Pam Barrett is aware of the Nurture Group following the recent grant application on behalf of Be Buckfastleigh for early years development.
- Minute No. 21/175 - Cllr Clarke has applied to the Western Power Distribution Community Matters Fund to facilitate 3 energy advice surgeries in the Town Hall and is awaiting a decision.
- Minute No. 21/176 – The Clerk has received a short response from Teignbridge District Council (TDC) Community Safety Officer concerning alleged safeguarding and health and safety issues in the vicinity of the Duckspound playing field – matter ongoing.

21/181. Police update: Unfortunately, the Police were unable to attend on this occasion.

21/182. Questions and comments from the public: None

21/183. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports:

Cllr Cox advised that TDC are short of refuse lorry drivers and are currently using parish sweepers and other personnel to try and meet the deficit, but they are still short staffed

There will be an online event about the TDC budget on Thursday 16th December.

Housing and mental health will be examined at the next Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

21/184. Co-option of a new Town Councillor:

The new applicant introduced herself to the meeting. Following an informal questions and answer session she left the meeting.

Decision: Members resolved unanimously to co-opt. Clerk to action.

21/185. Teignbridge Local Plan Review (Part 3) 2020-2040 Consultation: Renewable Energy, Gypsy and Traveller and Small Residential Site Options:

Cllr Patrick has reviewed the various proposals that may have an impact on Buckfastleigh and the neighbouring parishes within the Teignbridge district:

Bigadon Hill is designated for wind and solar generation which would cover a large area and have a significant impact.

The application for 30 houses on the Strode Road site has been identified as suitable for 10-14 houses only.

Gypsy and traveller provision in Ashburton – only one site is identified in the plan which is near Parkers Farm on a static site. There is a need for transit sites in Teignbridge which has not been resolved.

Cllr Cox reminded the meeting that this is a consultation exercise and the proposals within the plan are subject to determination.

Decision: It was agreed that the Town Council initially supports the plan but would welcome further discussion on matters that relate to Buckfastleigh and to reiterate concerns about any proposed housing on Strode Road.

Action: Encourage residents to participate – publish the link to this document on the Town Council website and social media. Clerk to submit a response on behalf of the Council.

21/186. Request to renew a public bench at Round Cross to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee:

Decision: It was agreed to purchase a replacement recycled bench at Round Cross. Clerk to action.

21/187. Buckfastleigh Citizens Advice Outreach Service update:

Cllr Clarke was pleased to report that the Citizens Advice outreach service funded by the Town Council is returning to Buckfastleigh Town Hall in January 2022.

21/188. Review and adopt a draft Investments Policy:

Decision: Adopted unanimously with suggested amendment already circulated.

21/189. Review of Financial Regulations:

Decision: Reviewed with no revisions – adopted unanimously.

21/190. Review of community consultation questionnaire results and draft budget and precept proposals for 2022/23:

The Clerk presented different ideas in response to the results of the questionnaire. Climate change/environment, parking, wellbeing and culture/events were clearly the main topics of concern and interest. The Clerk suggested some new initiatives which the Town Council could possibly fund such as the return of the rural skip service withdrawn by TDC in 2020, the provision of a new Tetra Pak facility, a climate/environment/recycling event in the autumn and social/wellbeing events for the older members of the community. The Clerk also noted that many people do not understand what the Town Council does or can do in relation to the larger authorities and that we should re-visit the information leaflet with a view to delivering to all households in 2022.

The Clerk presented the first draft of the Town Council budget and suggested that due to increasing financial pressures on our residents the precept for 2022/23 should not be increased, but due to a predicted increase in the Council Tax base the actual budget would be increased from £147,153 to £149,100.

Decision: Members agreed that no further revisions to the budget are required and unanimously voted in favour of a 0% increase to the 2022/23 precept.

21/191. Budget Analysis Report 01.11.21 – 30.11.21: Noted

21/192. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.11.21 – 30.11.21: Noted

21/193. Chair's Announcements:

Cllr Clarke attended the Teignbridge civic service at Newton Abbot.

Due to the current daily increase in positive Covid tests across the country Members raised concerns about continuing with face-to-face meetings. Cllr Cox and the Clerk confirmed that the temporary legislation introduced in 2020 and withdrawn in 2021 would need to be reinstated before virtual Council meetings can resume.

Speeding on Plymouth/Strode Road – Following investigation by the Town Ranger it has been established that Devon Highways will only approve a mobile speed calming sign if supported by the police and meets the list of criteria to approve a 20mph limit for the town.

Action: Cllr Greep to look at the criteria and report back to this meeting. It was agreed that Members would like the police to carry out a speed check in this area and are disappointed that the police did not attend this meeting or offer to have a surgery in the town.

72 Town Council funded Christmas meals with treat bags will be delivered on Christmas Eve.

21/194. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Taylor: Cycle South Dartmoor – the proposed Totnes to Buckfastleigh cycle route initiated by the Staverton Sustainable Transport Group has progressed further. Both Riverford and the Dartington Hall Estate are now on board, but there is a problem with access over the river Dart and main road. Sustrans have looked at the South Brent to Ashburton route too and the safety implications of children using this proposed route.

Funds are needed for both routes. Sustrans are in discussion with Highways England, but funding appears to be dictated by population size. Sustrans continue to support this route and have recommended that the next stage is a further technical feasibility study, but they currently do not have the capacity to do this.

Cllr Cox: Stover Park which is managed by Devon County Council is submitting a Lottery bid to undertake a major programme of improvements including dredging the lake, refurbishment of the gate house and lodge, new information points, interactive activities, and a café.

21/195. Items requiring Urgent Attention:

Defibrillator update: Following significant damage by a member of the public to the Chapel Street defibrillator case Cllr Clarke will write a letter to the organisation that were involved with a view to recovering all or some of the costs which amount to over £500 plus the cost of an electrician.

21/196. Summary of Key Messages:

Clerk to liaise with the Chair.

Meeting closed at 9.00 pm.