

# BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 7.00pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Sue Clarke (Chair), Erin Kohler-Ockmore, Caroline Bach-Price, John Bailey, Huw Cox, Ron Fox, David Patrick, Sylvee Phillips, Leigh Walker-Haworth, and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

**Press:** None

**In attendance:** 11 members of the public and Cllr John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council)

**22/107. Apologies for absence:** Cllrs Mark Jefferys and Kathy Taylor

**22/108. Councillors invited to declare any interests:**

Cllrs Cox and Fox both have dispensations to speak with regards to the Bungalow Youth Project and Victoria Park perennial grant applications respectively.

Cllr Phillips declared a non-pecuniary interest re the Bungalow Youth Project grant

Cllr Cox declared non-pecuniary interests re the Patchwork Quilt Challenge and Buckfastleigh Action for Nature Group smaller grant applications.

**22/109. To approve and sign the minutes from the Town Council Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and review actions from this meeting:**

Signed by Cllr Clarke

**Actions:**

- No Devon Association of Local Councils meeting has taken place.
- The Scout meeting with the Chair is still pending.
- **22/95:** Invitations to the next Tourism and Recreation meeting have been sent to traders on Fore Street, Chapel Street and Plymouth Road.
- **22/95:** A thank you letter has been sent on behalf of the Town Council and community to the Peter and Angela Collings for the long service they have provided at Huccaby's News and Cllr Clarke has spoken to the Collings regarding the future of a Post Office facility in the town centre.
- **22/100:** West End Telephone box – some expressions of interest have been received regarding its disposal and use for another purpose.

**22/110. Questions and comments from the public:**

A member of the public asked how the Town Council will help the pool to remain open. Cllr Clarke referred to the grant applications that will be discussed at this meeting. The Chair moved the meeting to Agenda item No. 5 to discuss receipt of three perennial grants.

**22/111. To consider the following three Perennial Grant Applications and agree the process of community consultation to determine the views of the parish regarding a proposed increase to the 2023/24 Council Tax bill:**

- (i) **Buckfastleigh Town Hall and Institute**
- (ii) **The Bungalow Youth Project**
- (iii) **Victoria Park and Swimming Pool**

Cllr Clarke gave an update on the perennial grants and that the Town Council currently contributes £21,000 per year to Victoria Park and the swimming pool. Due to the energy crisis Victoria Park have submitted a new grant application requesting that the Town Council increases this amount to £65,000. As this is a significant increase and that there are other demands on the precept which is the proportion of the Council Tax the Council receives, the Chair believes that the community should be consulted on this.

The Clerk initiated a discussion of how a parish meeting is called and how a parish poll is arranged. If the electorate wish to call a Parish Poll this would be arranged by Teignbridge District Council (TDC) and funded by the Town Council.

Cllr Patrick arrived at 7.20 pm and Cllr Bailey arrived at 7.30 pm.

Following receipt of three perennial grant applications the question is do the public want to raise the Council Tax to support Victoria Park, the Town Hall, and the Bungalow Youth Project?

Cllr Kohler-Ockmore explained that the Council is not involved in how the swimming pool is run.

Pam Barrett explained that the higher energy costs will force closure. Buckfastleigh Pool is run differently to other community pools as the staff are paid and not volunteers.

Cllr Bach-Price asked for figures for the grant applications:

Victoria Park and Pool - £65,000 per annum

Town Hall - £20,000 per annum

Bungalow Youth Project - £18,000 per annum

It was noted that the Town Council is the trustee for the Town Hall and is obliged to support this facility and that the poll would only relate to the additional funds requested by Victoria Park.

**Decision:** The Chair proposed that a Parish Meeting is convened for Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September at 7.00pm in the Town Hall to give the electorate the opportunity to request a Parish Poll. Proposal resolved unanimously. Clerk to action.

### **22/112. Smaller Grant Applications:**

- (i) **The Patchwork Challenge** - Audra Fitzgerald presented the application for £500. Cllr Clarke proposed, Cllr Fox seconded. £500 agreed unanimously.
- (ii) **Conversation Works CIC** - Kathrine Bailey talked about this dementia support group which provides cognitive stimulation therapy and has set up a memory café. Application is for £367. Cllr Clarke proposed, Cllr Cox seconded. £367 agreed unanimously.  
  
Cllr Patrick suggested that community first aid training would be useful too.
- (iii) **Buckfastleigh Action for Nature Group** - Cllr Cox presented this application for £500 to create a website. Cllr Clarke proposed, and Cllr Phillips seconded. Agreed unanimously.

Cllr Nutley said that groups can also apply to the Teignbridge District Council Councillor Community Fund

- (iv) **The Friendship Group** - Cllr Clarke proposed £500, seconded by Cllr Patrick. Agreed

- (v) **Buckfastleigh Youth Club** – Application for £500 for arts and crafts activities. Cllr Cox proposed £500, seconded by Cllr Clarke. Agreed

Agenda returned to item 4. 6 members of the public left.

**22/113. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to this meeting.**

Cllr Nutley – TDC meetings are taking place regarding the High Street fund, redevelopment of Newton Abbot and refurbishment of the play park at Teignmouth.

TDC owned leisure centres are returning to some normality following the disruption caused by Covid

There are ongoing problems with staffing the recycling team which is impacting collections

TDC are looking to freeze Council Tax for 2023-24 and will be funding £5,000 to each community pool. It is unlikely that TDC will help with community transport provision which comes under Devon County Council.

Pam Barrett: *Buckfastleigh contributes to facilities through their council tax which residents do not access and should have a proportion of the spend.*

Cllr Cox: Many leisure activities are funded by grants and s106 money, not the council tax.

1 member of the public left the meeting.

Cllr Bach-Price complained about the state of the Woodholme car park bus shelter which is owned by TDC.

**22/114. To note the engagement of a new Internal Auditor to undertake the interim review and year end annual audit with effect from 2022/23:**

The Clerk advised that Mr Stuart Carrington of Thomas Westcott Chartered Accountants LLP had been appointed as the new internal auditor for the Town Council.

The Clerk also advised that external audit of accounts for 2021/22 has been passed with no matters to be brought to the attention of the council.

**22/115. Budget Analysis Report 01.08.22-31.08.22:**

Approved. The Clerk and Councillors Clarke and Cox will meet regarding preliminary budget discussions.

**22/116. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.08.22-31.08.22: Approved**

**22/117. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest: None**

It was noted that there has been no further information regarding the proposed development at Barn Park.

**22/118. Chair's Announcements:**

Cllr Clarke recently met with the Food Bank and Be Buckfastleigh re the cost of living increases and discussed the availability of a warm space for people struggling to heat their homes during the

winter such a room in the Town Hall where people can have a warm drink, read, play board games etc.

This will be discussed further with trustees at the Town Hall meeting scheduled for Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September.

**22/119. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting:**

Cllr Walker-Haworth: The major gas pipe replacement work at Jordan Street will be for a period of 8 weeks and he is trying to arrange access for residents for bin collections etc.

Cllr Cox to ask Devonian if residents can park on their land for this period but space and vehicle movements may restrict this.

Cllr Patrick: The Mardle river camera is not working again, and it has been established that the solar panel which powers the camera has failed and needs replacement which has been actioned.

Cllr Cox: There are anti-social problems at the Orchard Millennium Green which have been causing concern and he has attended a Buckfast Residents Society meeting.

Cllr Bailey: The travellers who were evicted from the Football Club car park have moved to the Church turning circle and under the A38 at the Dean slipway.

**22/120. Items requiring urgent attention:** None

**22/121. Summary of Key Messages:**

Clerk to liaise with the Chair

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm.