

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 17th August 2022 at 7.00pm.

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

Press: None

22/88. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Caroline Bach-Price, Huw Cox, Mark Jefferys and Kathy Taylor

22/89. Councillors invited to declare any interests:

Cllrs Phillips declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 22/98 Larger Grant Application and submitted a request for dispensation to comment as a trustee with a controlling interest in The Valiant Soldier but abstained from voting.

22/90. Presentation on Gateway Town Project:

No representative from Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNP) or apologies given.

22/91. To approve and sign the minutes from the Town Council Meeting held on 20th July 2022 and review actions from this meeting:

Signed by Cllr Clarke

Actions:

- Cllr Cox reported that no report from the Devon Association of Local Councils is available to circulate as no meeting had taken place.
- The Scout meeting with the Chair is pending.

22/92. To approve and sign the minutes from the Extraordinary Town Council Meeting held on 3rd August 2022:

Signed by Cllr Clarke

22/93. To receive and note the minutes from the Tourism and Recreation Committee held on 10th August 2022:

New EV charging station proposal for the Salmons Leap site noted.

22/94. Questions and comments from the public: None

22/95. To acknowledge the announcement from Huccaby's News:

Cllr Patrick: Proposal to thank the owners of Huccaby's for their long service to the community and stepping in to take on the Post Office when it was threatened with closure. Can it be relocated to other premises? Suggestion to work with the traders to find a resolution.

Decision: Proposal seconded by Cllr Clarke with all Members in favour.

Buckfast Post Office is likely to close during the pending Buckfast Abbey care village works.

Cllr Bailey: There is limited trade in the town because it only tends to attract local residents. The

one-way system and parking also deter people from visiting the town.

Actions:

- Invite traders to the October Tourism and Recreation Committee meeting
- Clerk to send a letter of thanks to Peter and Angela Collings on behalf of the Town Council and community.
- Cllrs Clarke and Kohler-Ockmore to meet and discuss options with the current owner at what the space may be used for. It was agreed that there is a need for a newsagent.

22/96. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to this meeting: None

22/97. Planning applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest:

None. No further news regarding the Barn Park development and when it will be discussed at the Dartmoor National Park Development Management Committee.

22/98. Larger Grant Application:

Philippa Wood arrived at 7.30 pm to answer any questions on the grant application for The Valiant Soldier garden project.

Large trees have been removed to open up the space. A digger is needed to remove the roots, but DNP said an architect must be involved so trustees have decided to undertake the full project to restore and revitalise the garden. The project will also include the history of gardening, and subject to funding a kitchen garden, herb garden, wildlife and biodiversity initiatives, workshops, and the construction of a viewing platform to look at the river from the walled garden. The trustees have submitted a planning application and are looking at developing the barns too.

Footfall has increased this year and returned to pre-Covid levels but more local people are needed to become involved with preserving the history of The Valiant Soldier.

Cllr Clarke: Suggestion to include an oral history. Need new input and technical help.

DNP are keen that the site is developed.

Cllr Kohler-Ockmore: Re-visit links with South Devon Railway and the Otter Sanctuary. Contact the new Operations Manager at SDR.

Decision: Cllr Patrick proposed £3,500 from the Larger Grant budget and £500 from Smaller Grants to meet the £4,000 requested to support this project. Cllr Bailey seconded, with all in favour. Clerk to action.

22/99. Teignbridge Citizens Advice Buckfastleigh Outreach Activity Report April to June 2022:

Report noted.

22/100. Recommendation to remove the redundant West End telephone box:

The Town Council adopted this telephone box from BT in 2017 but while the 3 other traditional

red kiosks have found a useful purpose this 1990's design is not protected from the weather and various suggestions would not be practical. Members agreed that prior to removal it could be offered to anyone who is prepared to meet the cost of removal.

Action: Inga to post about its availability on social media and if no interest, the cost of removal/recycling brought to the next meeting.

22/101. Budget Analysis Report 01.07.22-31.07.22: Approved

22/102. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.07.22-31.07.22: Approved

22/103. Chair's Announcements:

The Clerk confirmed that she had received a grant application from Conversations Work CIC regarding funding for a cognitive stimulation therapy group following a recent email that had been circulated to councillors.

Moor Imagination Collective - a statement of support from the Chair has been sent concerning the proposal for a new community hub at the Methodist Church. A Community Interest Company is to be set up. An architectural survey has been undertaken and concluded that the building is structurally sound. The cost of refurbishment is estimated to be £500,000 in addition to the cost of purchase. The main space would be used as a venue and community kitchen with a café open until late. The purpose of the building would not be as an arts centre. The group are submitting a business plan to the National Lottery Heritage Fund on Friday 19th August and are looking for community support.

Cllr Clarke: there is concern that the proposed hub would take business out of the town centre, a review of existing community spaces is needed and to decide where the services from St. Luke's Church will go, such as the Food Bank.

22/104. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Bailey: Caravans are still at the Football Club and the site is growing again.

Cllr Phillips: There is overgrown vegetation on pavements which is making the town look unkempt.

The Clerk gave an update on the duckspod which has undergone some work to improve the depth of water available for its inhabitants. The fish were all safely moved to temporary accommodation and are now awaiting the water level to be restored when it rains.

22/105. Items requiring urgent attention:

The Council's Internal Auditor has unexpectedly terminated his contract to the Town Council and other local councils throughout Devon which is of major concern. The Council cannot operate legally without proper audit procedures in place. Companies solely dedicated to providing a council audit service in the southwest are quite limited or are not accepting new clients, the Clerk however, has already received a quote and is awaiting a second from local accountancy companies with parish council audit experience and capacity.

Decision: Due to the urgency of the situation and that the expected cost is well below the limit the Clerk can spend, Members unanimously agreed to delegate the choice and appointment of a new Internal Auditor to the Clerk to be ratified retrospectively at the next meeting.

22/106. Summary of Key Messages:

- We are pleased to award £4,000 to the Valiant Soldier for their Garden and Wall Restoration Project
- The Town Council will be expressing our thanks to Pete and Angie Collings at Huccaby's News for their long service to this community. An invitation will be sent to the town's traders shortly to invite them to the October Tourism and Recreation meeting to discuss the future of the town centre.
- A statement of support from the Chair has been sent to Moor Imagination Collective concerning their exciting proposals for the Methodist Church.

Meeting closed at 8.43 pm.