

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 18th January 2023 at 7.00pm.

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

Press: None

In attendance: 4 members of the public

23/178. Election of new Chair:

The Clerk invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor and Chair following the resignation of Cllr Sue Clarke as the Chair. Cllr Bailey nominated Cllr Cox and this was seconded by Cllr Kohler-Ockmore. All Members voted in favour and with no further nominations Cllr Huw Cox was appointed as Chair and Mayor for the remainder of the term for 2022/23.

Cllr Cox thanked Cllr Clarke for her work and commitment as Chair and Mayor.

23/179. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Mark Jefferys, and John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council).

No apologies received from Cllr Caroline Bach-Price. The Clerk confirmed that a letter has been sent to Cllr Bach-Price.

23/180. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

23/181. To approve and sign the minutes from the Town Council Meeting held on 21st December 2022 and review actions from this meeting:

Signed by Cllr Cox.

Actions:

- Cllr Cox has been unable to contact the member of the public who raised various issues at the October meeting. This will not be pursued further.

23/182. To receive the notes from the Town Council meeting with the Victoria Park charity held on 12th December 2022:

Noted

23/183. Questions and comments from the public:

Fanny Jackson from the Buckfastleigh Community Development Trust reported that the Bungalow has just been awarded a £270,000 lottery grant over the next 3 years subject to match funding. The trustees will be releasing a statement shortly. The young people who attend this facility are very excited and have asked for the opportunity to attend some outdoor activities such as kayaking.

Cllr Cox asked Fanny to return to the Council with an update.

The trustees will be setting up a youth management committee and engaging a qualified youth manager funded by this award. They would like a Town Councillor to be representative on this committee in due course.

They will be holding an Open Day on 4th February and would appreciate Council attendance at this. The community and parents will also be invited. There will be a consultation and they would like the young people to be involved in the decision-making process.

Action: Councillor to be appointed to the new youth management committee at the Annual Town Council Meeting in May.

23/184. To discuss two smaller grant applications deferred from the November Town Council meeting with applicants:

Pokemon Club: They previously received funds in July 2022. Libby Hamilton who runs the club with her husband explained that they have moved to the Buckfastleigh Youth Club from the Town Hall which is a more suitable venue for their needs. They are paying £20 hire per week and have set up a subscription for patrons who can afford to pay if they wish. They are currently receiving £37.00 per month for this initiative. They are also setting up a Community Interest Company.

The club is very popular and many of the children know Libby through the school and are learning valuable social skills. Parents believe the club is very important. Examples of support from parents and children were read out to the meeting. 25 young people have signed up to the group's in-house league. They do not yet have a separate bank account.

Decision: Cllr Clarke proposed a £500 grant, seconded by Cllr Walker-Haworth with all Members in favour. Clerk to action.

Woolly Nanas: Ruth Chadwick leads the group. Workshops have been held at Hello Summer and one-off workshops for individuals e.g. in spinning. Ruth wants to build up skills. They will be running workshops from the back of Moorland Crafts, but not all of these will be wool-themed as they are expanding the range of classes which are on offer such as soap-making. This will be a permanent space, but they are also looking at holding an exhibition at the Valiant Soldier – the story of wool in Buckfastleigh.

The group have applied for an Awards for All grant too as they have grown since their original Town Council grant was awarded. They still want to hold workshops in the Town Hall and this application is specifically for these workshops which will be free of charge for children or by donation, especially if living outside of Buckfastleigh. Funds are sought for 5 workshops in the Town Hall and one in Moorland Crafts.

Decision: Cllr Clarke proposed £438, seconded by Cllr Phillips, but this was revised to £500 with all in favour. Clerk to action.

23/185. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Cox reported that Buckfast Play Park is next on the list for refurbishment and will continue to be run by Teignbridge District Council (TDC).

There is an online consultation for the Teignbridge Local Plan which the public are encouraged to complete.

TDC Budget: Council Tax will be increased by £5.40 on a Band D property but with a planned rebate this will cancel out the rise for lower band households.

People will now need photo ID if they vote in person e.g. passport, driving licence or a voter authority certificate for all elections.

Action: To publish information from the Electoral Services Commission on the website and social media.

Cllr Cox raised concerns about the new ban on wild camping on Dartmoor following the recent High Court ruling.

Action: Cllr Cox proposed that the Town Council writes to Dartmoor National Park (DNP) to object to this decision. This as seconded by Cllr Clarke with all Members in favour. Clerk to action.

Cllr Cox reported that a new postmistress has been engaged to run the Buckfast Post Office, but no suitable premises or funding have been secured for Buckfastleigh. Together with the postmaster for Ashburton they are exploring alternative provision such as a mobile van.

Cllr Cox is also looking at an existing rural bus service to go around the town once a week which includes a stop at Buckfast Post Office.

23/186. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest:

A new planning application for Whitecleave Quarry is due for consideration. The application will be for a local organisation to have new training premises for seafaring organisations and individuals such as the fishing and tourism industry. This will be an unobtrusive facility which will not disturb the wildlife and will bring trade into the town. Members agreed that the site with its deep lake is idea for this purpose and will support once full planning permission is sought.

It should be noted that this is a TDC planning application and not Devon County Council as no mineral extraction or waste storage is involved. A stop notice has recently been served with regards to current activity, but the Town Council is unaware of what this entails and has not received any information.

23/187. Review of Council Meeting structure and timetable:

The Clerk explained that the reduction in the number of meetings due to the restrictions of Covid is no longer workable and proposed that the Finance Committee is reinstated although it is not required on a monthly basis as day-to-day reports and the smaller grants could still be presented to full Council.

Decision: Proposed by Cllr Cox, seconded by Cllr Phillips with all Members in favour. The Finance Committee will consist of Cllrs Cox, Clarke, Bailey and Kohler-Ockmore with the option to co-opt if one of these members are unavailable. The new Councillor who will be co-opted at the February Town Council meeting may also wish to become a member of this committee.

Cllr Cox would like to expand the remit of the Tourism and Recreation Committee so that it is more than a forum for local organisations to report back on their activities. He suggests that other groups such as the youth clubs should also be invited to participate.

Action: This will be an agenda item for the next Tourism and Recreation meeting.

23/188. To receive and note the Buckfastleigh Youth Wellbeing Café Annual Report:

Noted.

Members agreed that the report included positive feedback from the young people who attend and their parents. This is a very popular group and the organisers should be congratulated on their

success. It is hoped they can work with the Bungalow in the near future.

23/189. Budget Analysis Report 01.12.22-31.12.22: Noted

23/190. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.12.22-31.12.22: Noted

23/191. Multi-Pay Card Statements October 2022 to December 2022: Noted

23/192. Quarterly Bank Reconciliation October 2022 to December 2022: Noted

Signed by Cllr Cox

23/193. Chair's Announcements:

Cllr Cox, Judith Hart, and Gary Quest (the Town Ranger) met with the Environment Agency (EA) and signed up to the new flood warning service. There will be a community training event for flooding and volunteers in early spring, but more volunteers are needed.

River camera update: due to ongoing reliability and maintenance issues the Council is seeking the opinion of the EA and have asked to meet with the Devon County Council Coastal and Flooding Officer to look at the future value of the camera. It was noted that the licence is due for renewal in July.

The Ranger and Clerk have reviewed the Community Emergency Plan. The need for an emergency plan has been highlighted by recent problems caused by increased rainfall.

Action: Cllrs Cox and Clarke to review the revised plan.

23/194. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Fox – has received some very positive comments about the town and how colourful it is.

Cllr Phillips – pleased to report that the planning application to renovate The Valiant Soldier garden have been approved.

Action: Inga to update the business website page.

Cllr Clarke to meet the new Chief Constable for Devon and Cornwall Police.

There has been positive feedback on the Christmas meals and a suggestion to nominate some households that have not requested a meal.

The bench at the top of Bossell Road needs replacing but no-one will accept ownership. The small garden is maintained by the local group of the Royal British Legion (RBL) who believe that the Town Council should take ownership.

The Clerk has suggested that the RBL apply for match funding from the Town Council via a grant.

There have been several reports of speeding, but this must be referred to the police.

Cllr Cox – 'No overnight parking' signs to be erected up by Holy Trinity Church. Caravans to be removed.

Cllr Clarke – concern re lack of information on the Barn Park development.

Action: Clerk to contact DNPA for an update.

23/195. Items requiring urgent attention:

The Clerk highlighted ongoing problems with the bank that have still not been resolved.

Action: Clerk to make an official complaint and then refer to the Financial Ombudsman.

23/196. Summary of Key Messages:

Clerk to prepare.

23/197. Motion to move into a Part II (private) session to discuss one item of confidential business in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

Meeting returned to Part I and closed at 8.55 pm.