

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15th March 2023 at 7.00pm.

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

Press: None

In attendance: Ella Briens, Dartmoor National Park (DNP) Ranger, James Lucas, Moor Imagination Collective; and Jim Coulton and Anne Welfare, Scoriton and Buckfastleigh Twinning Association

23/219. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Sylvee Phillips Ron Fox, Mark Jefferys, and John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council)

23/220. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

23/221. To approve and sign the minutes from the Town Council Meeting held on 15th February 2023 and review actions from this meeting:

Signed by Cllr Cox.

Action:

- Response to the new Salmons Leap EV charging station application – Clerk will include the lack of consultation with both the Town Council as a statutory stakeholder and residents who live adjacent to this site which lies just within the boundary of Ashburton with the response to the Dartmoor Local Plan.

23/222. To receive and note the minutes of the Tourism, Recreation and Community Development Committee held on 22nd February 2023:

Noted.

Action:

- New Youth Forum - Chair and Clerk to extend an invitation to safeguarding leads from the schools. Clerk waiting for a date which is convenient for the police to attend.

23/223. Questions and comments from the public:

Ella Briens reported that DNP ranger areas are changing. Cllr Clarke asked how the Council can help? Parish Councils can help with lobbying and letters of support for DNP and writing to the Chief Executive. Long term investment and increased funding is needed. The post of Tree Officer is being abolished. Cllr Clarke asked what the point of bylaws is if the rangers are not available to enforce them.

Police report – an overview. The relationship between the police and representation to the Town Council has improved. The number of police officers in Devon has significantly decreased which is impacting workload.

Cllr Clarke asked on behalf of a member of the public if the Town Council could help a local charity run by 2 firefighters following the sad death of one of their colleagues. It was confirmed that the Council can support with publicity but not financially.

22/224. Donation of a new public bench from the Scoriton and Buckfastleigh Twinning Association:

The Twinning Association thanked the Town Council for its support and the donation of a red telephone box which has generated more interest and membership. Their twin town in Henri Fontaine, France would like to donate a public bench in return. There are currently 2 options for places to put it: the Orchard Millennium Green or the memorial garden at the junction of Bossell Road and Crest Hill. The Twinning Association will decide which is their preferred option or suggest other suitable locations.

22/225: To consider a Smaller Grant Application deferred from the February meeting and ratify a second grant application:

Clr Walker-Haworth declared an interest in the Moor Imagination Collective grant application which was deferred to later in the meeting (see below)

23/226. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to this meeting:

Clr Cox reported that Teignbridge District Council (TDC) business is quiet due to the upcoming elections.

The TDC Local Plan consultation date has been extended.

Action on Climate in Teignbridge had a meeting with the Environment Agency which Clr Cox attended. He will circulate information.

It was acknowledged that there has been a 20-100% increase in storm overflow for sewerage monitoring.

23/227. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest:

Revised Buckfast Abbey planning application: 0300/19 for a care village. There are some material changes, but the application is the same in principle.

Members requested clarification regarding the new community centre. How will this be run and by whom? Will it be a trust? It is important that it is retained and managed as a community asset and not a business.

Recruitment – will the Abbey employ locally and will staff be transported in? The site will have its own medical facilities which should not impact the medical centre in Buckfastleigh.

It was agreed that there are no valid planning objections to the revisions in this application.

Decision: Members agreed that the previous response of the Town Council stands but requests confirmation that the community hub will be run independently and be available for use by local residents. Clerk to respond accordingly.

23/228. Request to join and promote the Hedgehog Highway Project:

Information regarding this project had been circulated to Members and it was noted that nationally many town and parish councils had already subscribed.

Decision: Agreed to spend £150 to support the objectives of this project and place an order for the hedgehog highway equipment and information to be made available to residents.

23/229. Buckfastleigh Tennis Courts - update:

Cllr Cox reported that the Lawn Tennis Association has a new budget to refurbish tennis courts. The availability of funding bids is in the early stages of discussion, but TDC would have to apply for this fund for the refurbishment of tennis courts identified in the area. Cllr Cox is awaiting updates regarding Buckfastleigh. He confirmed that if successful TDC would need to charge for lessons and coaching in return for funding.

23/225. To consider a Smaller Grant Application deferred from the February meeting and ratify a second grant application (deferred):

James Lucas arrived at 8.08 pm to discuss the Moor Imagination Collective (MIC) grant application.

James gave an update on progress – funding is needed for publicity to raise awareness of the project. They are now in the position that a local entrepreneur will purchase the Methodist Hall and lease it to them but with some conditions including the need for a comprehensive business plan for phase I. The Heritage Lottery will fund this. The funder also wants the group to re-visit certain aspects of the plan.

MIC will do crowdfunding but needs grant funding for more community engagement, business planning and consultancy work.

The first phase of the refurbishment will cost £150,000 and will allow the ground floor to be open for use by the public and run by volunteers. The aim is to use local contractors and have an apprenticeship scheme for young people.

Cllr Bailey highlighted the lack of volunteers and how these will be recruited.

Decision: Cllr Clarke proposed £500 and Cllr Bailey seconded this, with all Members in favour.

The £500 grant to Participate Arts for workshops was also ratified retrospectively by all Members present.

The Town Hall roof requires urgent repairs due to the ingress of rainwater. Members agreed due to the urgency of the situation that contractors should proceed with the work and that this decision will be ratified at the next Town Hall Trust meeting.

The Clerk informed Members that the Buckfast noticeboard has blown down and is beyond repair. The Town Council has a statutory requirement to provide information to residents in different formats including hard copy notices displayed in prominent areas.

Action: Quotes for a replacement notice board to be sought.

Cllr Clarke left the meeting at 8.30 pm.

23/226. Budget Analysis Report 01.02.23-28.02.23: Noted.

The remaining amount of £137.41 in the Mayor's Good Causes Fund will be donated to the library towards upgrading the children's reading area project. Clerk to action.

23/227. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.02.23-28.02.23: Noted

23/228. Chair's Announcements: None

23/229. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Kohler-Ockmore advised that she has not been able to access the internet hence her lack of communication on council matters.

23/230. Items requiring urgent attention: None

23/231. Summary of Key Messages:

Clerk to prepare.

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm.