

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 19th July 2023 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: Huw Cox (Chair), John Bailey, Emma Fitzpatrick, Sylvee Phillips, Leigh Walker-Haworth, and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

In attendance: Cllrs Stuart Rogers (Teignbridge District Council) and 30 members of the public including representation from the Friends of Buckfastleigh Library and Buckfastleigh Bowls Club.

Press: None

23/73. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Sue Clarke and Paul Georghiades. No apologies received from Cllr Ron Fox

23/74. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

23/75. To approve and sign the minutes of the Annual Town Council Meeting and Town Council Meeting held on 21st June 2023 and review actions from these meetings:

Signed by Cllr Cox.

Actions:

- The No Alcohol Designation Zone which covered Buckfastleigh town centre is out of date. Cllr Cox to reapply to Teignbridge District Council (TDC) to reinstate.

23/76. Proposal 7.6 of the Dartmoor National Park Local Plan – Land at Timbers Road – Presentation by Dave Seaton of PCL Planning Ltd, Exeter:

The parcel of land adjacent to Timbers Road is designated in the Local Plan and this outline planning application is to confirm the principle of development and deal with the proposed access to the site with a map of development. There will be two-way vehicle traffic at the junction, currently it is only one-way and will have pedestrian access to avoid the road.

The Housing Needs Survey (HNS) identified a need for 34 homes in Buckfastleigh. There is evidence of unmet need as shown in the housing register. This proposal is for 75 dwellings of which 34 (45%) will be affordable homes: 22 x 2 bed flats (affordable), 8 x 2 bed houses (shared ownership) and 4 x 3 bed houses (shared ownership). There will be no 1 bedroom flats. One third of the affordable properties will be shared ownership.

The Section 106 agreement is still to draft.

Cllr Phillips: The site lies within the parish of Dean Prior and South Hams. The HNS is also out of date.

Cllr Cox: The site is in South Hams and the affordable homes will be allocated by the Housing Associations.

Dave Seaton: Buckfastleigh and Dean Prior will get priority for allocation – this is part of the agreement. They have carried out ecological surveys which have identified that it is not a significant foraging route for the bats, but they will create a new hedgerow.

Cllr Bailey: The S106 will mostly benefit Buckfastleigh but may have to share it with Dean Prior.

He has seen with other planning applications that the content has changed so the affordable provision is decreased, and market housing is increased.

Dave Seaton; Planning permission is only valid for 3 years.

Cllr Cox: This is a fairly big development for this area, so can a public meeting be arranged?

Dave Seaton: Leaflets and information can be published on the Town Council website.

Action: Cllr Cox and Dave Seaton to liaise regarding a public meeting in the Town Hall to allow residents the opportunity to raise their concerns and questions.

It was agreed that the Town Council meeting is not the appropriate forum for a questions and answers session due to the restriction on time.

One member of the public highlighted her concerns about use of the existing single-track road, cycle path and that this area is popular with dog walkers.

23/77. Proposal for a self-build 3 bedroom detached house at Tweenaways, Buckfastleigh:

The applicant purchased a plot of land for self-build adjacent to their council house, which once vacant will be released for allocation to another family. The site is between no. 34 and 35 at the top of Tweenaways.

Action: Cllr Cox to visit applicants to discuss further.

Decision: Pending receipt and examination of the planning application, Members are supportive in principle to this proposal.

23/78. Presentation by Ashburton and South Dartmoor Business Network:

Nigel Ward, Chair of Ashburton and South Dartmoor Business Network (ASDBN) (formally Ashburton Chamber of Trade) explained they now have a larger area of operation and would like to include Buckfastleigh businesses. They are asking the Town Council to support this initiative. They currently have 80 members, a new website, and a weekly magazine called the 'Friday Fry-Up'. The organisation has some links to Ashburton Town Council for example, attending each other's meetings and would like to invite a representative from Buckfastleigh Town Council to attend. They have breakfast and evening meetings and would also like to meet in Buckfastleigh if a relationship develops.

The ASDBN has a group of executive officers who each have their own responsibilities such as media, events and publicity and they also have an active WhatsApp group and organise member training, for example on cyber security. Their objective is to raise the level of business in the area.

They encourage local businesses to reach out to the ASDBN and host a come-to-a-get-to-know-you social session. There is a £35 annual membership fee for all businesses.

23/79. Questions and comments from the public:

A member of the public raised the issue of anti-social behaviour in relation to the bench opposite the Coop on Chapel Street which is used by the same 2 or 3 individuals daily. Cllr Cox has spoken to the police and the Teignbridge District Council (TDC) anti-social behaviour and safeguarding officer, and some action is now being instigated but due process must be followed. There is currently no indication of timescale and removal of the bench would be a last resort as it is likely to move the problem to another area. Cllr Cox will talk to the individuals concerned and this

matter has been signposted to other organisations.

A second member of the public detailed all the issues around anti-social behaviour: drugs, alcohol, shouting, loud music etc. Focus is on the bench which affects the residents living in that area. He asked for removal of the bench. Cllr Cox said that had been suggested but would be further down the line.

Action: Cllr Cox to ask TDC to renew the No Alcohol Designation Zone in the town centre.

23/80. To consider Larger Grant Applications and recommendations from the Finance Committee deferred from the June meeting:

Friends of Buckfastleigh Library application: they have now answered the previous questions raised by Councillors and are aware that the Town Council may not be able to fund the whole grant. One session a week with 6-8 children is proposed. There needs to be a certain standard for the equipment hence the use of one supplier.

Decision: Cllr Cox proposed a grant of £2891.99. All Members agreed.

Buckfastleigh Bowls Club application: A representative of the club advised that they have already undertaken the proposed work.

The Clerk confirmed that retrospective applications are not accepted, and costs cannot be refunded.

Decision: Application rejected.

23/81. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to this meeting:

No Devon County Council report received.

Cllr Cox reported on a new TDC scheme called “SPRINT”. Working with private landlords to find prospective tenants. Checking landlords and tenants provides extra control.

There will be an affordable housing questionnaire in early August for each Council to complete to assess rural need. Cllr Rogers to circulate the information to the Clerk.

23/82. To discuss the communication from Buckfastleigh Community Forum with reference to alleged recent activity at Whitecleave Quarry:

The son of the quarry owner was present. He said the quarry had not pumped anything into the Dean Burn River and the pumps no longer work.

Cllr Cox had walked further up into Dean and the Dean Burn was coloured beyond the quarry.

It was confirmed that overhang topsoil brought down approximately 1 tonne of material, possibly due to animal movement and natural erosion. This did not hit the lake.

Cllr Bailey expressed concern about the allegations made by the Buckfastleigh Community Forum, there is no evidence for these allegations.

Action: Cllr Cox to draft a response.

The site is not a SSSI, only adjacent to one, Potters Wood.

23/83. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest – to include Application 22/01697/FUL Whitecleave Quarry – *Change of use of site to a non-residential training centre for seafarers and associated works for a period of 6 years, including retention and reuse of existing temporary buildings and addition of a temporary firefighting training structure and associated steel shelter.*

The applicant was represented. The training is for seafaring vessels of over 24m to include first aid, sea survival, fire prevention and firefighting. It is mostly classroom based but they also use shipping containers. The training is quiet and non-obtrusive. Currently it takes place in Kingskerswell. They train approximately 50 people per month from all over the UK who stay in local accommodation. It is non-polluting other than the use of extinguishers which are filled with washing up liquid and baking powder.

A new bat survey has been undertaken and a greater crested newt survey. The fire training rig will not be in the bat flight path. An ecologist has confirmed there will be no impact on the bats. Training is Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 5.00pm. There is no night-time training. They would like to move their company to Buckfastleigh due to its location. They are the only full-time training providers west of Gloucester. They will retain the existing low-level buildings and the new rig will be out of sight. There is potential to use the lake in the future if it is approved for lifeboat training. They will provide business for the town and their activity will be non-obtrusive and help save lives at sea.

The Town Council was supportive in principle, however the application has only just become live on the planning portal so all Councillors need to review before making comments.

23/84. Community consultation/participatory proposals for the 2024/25 budget setting process:

Cllrs Bailey, Cox, Fitzpatrick, Georghades, and Phillips will form a working party with the Clerk in August to progress this. The aim is to have a draft budget in November with approval at the December full Council meeting.

23/85. Budget Analysis Report 01.06.23 – 30.06.23: Noted

23/86. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statements 01.06.23 – 30.06.23: Noted

23/87. Multi-Pay Card Statements April 2023 to June 2023: Noted

23/88. Quarterly Bank Reconciliation April 2023 to June 2023: Noted.

23/89. Annual Review of the Town Council Standing Orders: Approved

23/90. To review and adopt by resolution a new Cyber Security Policy:

Suggestion to seek the opinion of an IT consultant.

Decision: Members agreed to adopt subject to review.

23/91. Chair's Announcements:

None.

23/92. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting:

Councillor training has been undertaken provided by the Devon Association of Local Councils.

Cllr Fitzpatrick visited Victoria Park and swimming pool as a representative of the Town Council.

Cllr Phillips attended the Dartmoor National Park Forum meeting. A court decision on wild camping is pending.

There is no update concerning the refurbishment of the tennis court as yet.

23/93. Summary of Key Messages:

Clerk to action.

23/94. 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 9.10 pm.