

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Tourism & Recreation Meeting held on Wednesday 22nd February 2023 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors Huw Cox (Chair), Sylvee Phillips, Paul Georghiades (co-opted onto this committee), and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

In attendance: Fanny Jackson (Bungalow Youth Project), Val Browning (The Valiant Soldier & Orchard Millennium Green), Kerry McCabe (TRAYE), Sophie Lovatt (Moorland Imagination Collective & Maverick Learning Community), Alasdair Page (South Devon Railway), Mandy Hayman (Moorland Arts and Crafts) and Logan Berry (Buckfastleigh Youth Club)

22/35. Apologies for absence: Sheila Phillips (William Pengelly Caves Studies Trust), Cllr John Bailey (Buckfastleigh Football Club), Maureen Tuffnell (Orchard Millennium Green), David Field (Otter Sanctuary), Elaine Day (Buckfast Residents Society), Cllrs Leigh Walker-Haworth and Sue Clarke

22/36. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

22/37. To approve and sign the minutes from the Tourism and Recreation Meeting held on 30th November 2022: Signed by Cllr Cox. No actions.

22/38. Questions and comments from the public: No public present

22/39. Proposal to extend the remit and terms of reference for this committee:

The Chair explained that this is more of a forum than a formal meeting where membership has been extended to other groups and organisations within the town. It was agreed to amend the title to Tourism, Recreation and Community Development to reflect the wider remit.

The youth strategy would also be incorporated into this meeting and Fanny agreed to share the Bungalow Youth Project strategy documents with the Town Council.

22/40. Comments from local visitor attractions, businesses, and organisations:

Mandy Hayman – Moorland Arts and Crafts is not closing but may be diversifying to provide a crafting space and other uses.

The Valiant Soldier will re-open on Wednesday 29th March. The renovation of the rear garden will start in spring to include fruit trees and a vegetable plot. Other works such as redecoration are also being looked at. They plan to hold events for visitors.

Fanny Jackson – the Bungalow Youth Project has been notified of a successful lottery bid for £270K over 3 years. They have worked hard over the last 2 years to improve governance and engage with young people to provide feedback. Part of the funding will be used to employ a new youth manager.

Cllr Phillips – The Valiant Soldier is fundraising for refurbishment of the Tourist Information Centre, to create accessible archives and a small meeting space in the back room.

Logan Berry – Buckfastleigh Youth Club is struggling financially. They cater mostly for primary school children on Friday nights. It used to be 3 nights a week and for a wider age group. They need a fundraiser to help access funds. The club has a full repair and lease agreement with the

Exeter Diocese and as it is an old building much of their funds is used for repairs. They would also like to make more use of the space.

It was agreed that the town is fortunate to have three youth facilities catering for all needs.

Kerry McCabe – TRAYE runs a Wellbeing Café for young people which provides free food, cookery classes and a range of other activities. There has been a noticeable increase in young people with mental health problems and suffering from the impact of poverty. The café provides a safe space for young people, but youth workers are finding that there is greater need for more one to one work. TRAYE is interested in the youth strategy and how the groups can work together. They would like to reinstate the youth forum which included police representation.

Cllr Cox – Devon and Cornwall Police are now in special measures and will have to be more proactive and community focused.

Logan – the police used to visit the youth club regularly. More community policing and multi-agency work is needed.

It was agreed that all the youth groups in Buckfastleigh need to work together.

Cllr suggested that the Teignbridge District Council officer for community safety should also join the youth forum.

Action: Cllr Cox and the Clerk to contact all the agencies for a new youth forum and to arrange a meeting.

Sophie Lovatt – The Maverick Learning Community is a CIC which supports home education and children in non-mainstream education and is creating a community for youth empowerment. They have been overwhelmed by demand and have over 20 young people on the waiting list from Buckfastleigh and the surrounding area. The group is currently using space at the youth club until a permanent venue is found.

Kerry – There is an increase in home education, but some children are not receiving any education.

Fanny – There is also an increase in truancy from school. It is important that children are motivated to return to school or work.

Sophie – Moorland Imagination Collective has been working for the past year to buy the Methodist Church on Chapel Street as a venue to bring groups and residents together. There is the potential to buy the church in the summer. They are looking at hosting an open space event, an opportunity for people to bring questions and ideas. A consultation on what people would like to have in the town has already been carried out.

Alasdair Page – South Devon Railway (SDR) would also like to offer their space. Children with additional needs do visit and use the garden.

In 2022, they had 100,000 visitors, 40,000 of which were for the Polar Express. This will be repeated for Christmas 2023.

There is a planning application to develop the field for parking and an improved entrance with information points. SDR would like a coordinated approach between the visitor attractions and town centre businesses. They have noted increased passenger visits to Buckfastleigh. The vintage bus will be going to Totnes this summer.

They are aware that there is a problem with walking from the railway to the town. The route is

unattractive with no footpath and poor signage. The Be Buckfastleigh map which is available for visitors excludes the railway.

Val – The Valiant Soldier are facilitating a new History Society with the first meeting being held on Thursday 20th April.

It was agreed that the town should have a new heritage map and to re-visit the flow of visitors from the railway to the town.

Mandy – It is difficult for businesses to open seven days a week and for long hours because they cannot afford extra staff.

Cllr Cox - The Chamber of Trade has not existed for some time. Ashburton Chamber of Trade however expanding and are looking at extending their membership to other communities in South Dartmoor.

Sophie suggested an app and audio recordings for visitors.

Alasdair – the town needs a brand such as a woollen town.

Alasdair – there has been a significant increase in vandalism at the railway during January and February with many unreplacable historical items damaged. A group of young people have now come forward and the police are involved.

Sophie – it is important to connect the residents with Buckfastleigh and not just the visitors to see the attractions as part of the town.

It was agreed that the Youth Forum should report back to this meeting.

22/41. Proposals for the community celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III on 6th May 2023:

The Orchard Millennium Green will hold a 2-day event similar to the Platinum Jubilee in June 2022.

South Devon Railway are happy to offer a celebratory event too.

The Town Council are sourcing a commemorative gift to all children of primary school age in Buckfastleigh but will check with the two primary schools to avoid any clash.

The Valiant Soldier will be hosting a cocktail evening in the museum.

The Coronation celebration was discussed, and it was acknowledged that not all people support this event, but the town needs to facilitate it for those who do want to celebrate.

22/42. Planning, management, and communications issues for projects which are within the remit of this committee:

Covered under the above items.

22/43. Items requiring urgent attention: None

Meeting closed at 8.37 pm.