

# BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7.00pm.**

**Present:** Councillors Sue Clarke (Deputy Chair), John Bailey, Ron Fox, Sylvee Phillips, Leigh Walker-Haworth and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

**In attendance:** 5 members of the public

**Press:** None

**23/111. Apologies for absence:** Cllrs Huw Cox, Emma Fitzpatrick, and Paul Georghiades John Nutley and Stuart Rogers (Teignbridge District Council)

**23/112. Councillors invited to declare any interests:** Cllr Walker-Haworth regarding the Moor Imagination Collective smaller grant application.

**23/113. To approve and sign the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2023 and review actions from these meetings:**

Signed by Cllr Clarke.

**Actions:**

- To carry over to the next meeting in the absence of an update by the Chair: The No Alcohol Designation Zone which covered Buckfastleigh town centre is out of date. Cllr Cox is pursuing this with Teignbridge District Council.

**23/114. To receive and note the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023. To resolve the following recommendations from Minute No. 23/22: To review ring-fenced budgets and make recommendations to full Council for the 24/25 budget.**

**Resolved:** to use the Climate and Environmental budget during this financial year and have a new Climate and Environmental revenue budget for 2024/25. Clerk to use ring-fenced funds where appropriate or carry over as surplus. Transfer the Victoria Park £10,000 contingency fund into the Business Reserve

**23/115. Questions and comments from the public:** None

**23/116. Smaller Grant Applications:**

Woolly Nanas – 2 members present. There has been huge interest in the new Wool Hub on Fore Street which offers skills that are relevant to the history of the town. Drop-in and taster sessions are available with refreshments and activities. The group are now applying for funds to continue into the new year and offer a warm hub facility. They are looking at becoming a CIC if success continues and the remit widens. The drop-in sessions are free but make a subsidised charge for the workshops.

**Decision:** Proposed £500 by Cllr Phillips, seconded by Cllr Clarke with all in favour.

Moorland Community Care – 2 members present. The group meets twice a month at St. Luke's Church and offers homemade food, connections for the lonely, and a warm safe space. They are currently recruiting volunteer drivers for the isolated and undertake wellbeing checks if there are any concerns or for those who do not have transport. 10-20 regulars attend each session, and it is open to

residents who are over 50 years. MCC is looking at running weekly sessions with 2 at Buckfastleigh and 2 at Ashburton. Some clients also have mental health issues, so they need skilled staff for this. They work with the NHS and social services.

**Decision:** Cllr Clarke proposed £500, seconded by Cllr Phillips with all in favour.

Moor Imagination Collective – 1 member of the organisation present who runs Moor Movement at the youth club every Wednesday evening for children and adults providing Kung-Fu and kick boxing tuition. This has been running for 2 months and they would like to expand membership. Residents are asking for a gym, and they are looking at space to facilitate this. They would like to connect with the Bungalow Youth Project and offer a pilot project for teenagers. The organisation is aware of anti-social behaviour in the town and is offering young people an alternative, but funds are needed for some more equipment. Cllr Clarke suggested contacting Devon Social Care for funding.

**Decision:** Cllr Bailey proposed £500, seconded by Cllr Clarke with all in favour.

Cllr Walker-Haworth did not vote due to his connection to Moor Imagination Collective.

Cllr Clarke referred to the Town Council Youth Strategy where the Town Council fund youth groups within the parish.

River Dart Explorer Scout Unit – no representatives present. Members agreed to defer this application to the October meeting. Approved in principle but would like a little more information.

### **23/117. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to this meeting:**

It was agreed that the Town Council is not receiving many updates from District and County Councillors and the lack of attendance by Cllrs Nutley and Rogers was duly noted.

Cllr Fox: We need our District Councillors to lobby on behalf of Buckfastleigh.

**Action:** Clerk to email Cllrs Nutley, Rogers, and Parker Khan to express discontent at non-attendance and lack of reports.

### **23/118. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest:** None

### **23/119. To review the Police Reports for July and August 2023:**

Both reports reviewed.

**Action:** Clerk to write to the MP for Totnes to enquire about the new Project Community Access initiative and if this only applies to towns and parishes within South Hams when reference has been made to Buckfastleigh in correspondence. Members agreed that the Town Hall would be an ideal venue for a Police Hub.

### **23/120. Feedback from the Councillor Surgery held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2023:**

The surgery was held in Fore Street on a Saturday morning and facilitated by Cllrs Clarke and Phillips who reported a reasonably good attendance.

Issues raised by residents were weeds, overhanging branches, road sweeping, overgrown verges, dog waste and a bus service for Totnes secondary school. Country Bus have however added another bus for this route, but will they have the funding to continue this service? Young people in

Buckfastleigh cannot access travel for employment, apprenticeships, college education or participate in out of hours/after school activities as there is no regular or reliable transport to Exeter, Plymouth, South Devon College etc. There is a suggestion to pay a contractor to do this, but how would all areas be serviced at the same time? Members agreed that the lack of rural transport should be raised with the funding providers.

There needs to be a joined-up approach and evidence-based facts. How are other areas effected and have their residents raised the same issues?

**Action:** Clerk to contact Ashburton and South Brent Councils, and Cllr Clarke to contact the schools to request statistics. Feedback at the next meeting.

Other issues raised were lack of parking, a mobile banking service and a thank you to the Town Council from the Friends of Buckfastleigh Library for recent grant funding.

**23/121. To approve a quote to provide a new Tetrapak carton recycling service in the Victoria Woodholme car park, pending approval by Teignbridge District Council:**

The Clerk confirmed that this service is affordable at £60.00 per collection with an initial outlay of £690.00 to supply the purpose-built container. This would provide another option for recycling in the town centre. The Town Ranger would oversee use to ensure the area is kept tidy.

**Decision:** Approved subject to TDC permission to use the car park. Cllr Cox to pursue.

**23/122. Proposal to sign up to the National Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Council Clerks and County Associations “Civility and Respect Project” to include a new Dignity at Work policy.**

The Clerk explained that this is a nationwide initiative to enable councils to demonstrate that they are committed to standing up to poor behaviour and supporting positive change following growing concerns about the impact of bullying, intimidation and harassment on local councils, councillors, clerks, and council staff.

**Decision:** Cllr Clarke proposed, seconded by Cllr Fox with all in favour. Clerk to publish and email all councillors that the pledge has been signed and a new Dignity at Work policy has been adopted.

**23/123. To adopt an amendment to the Town Council Code of Conduct as set out in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.**

**Decision:** Cllr Clarke proposed, seconded by Cllr Walker-Haworth with all in favour.

**23/124. Town Council 2024/25 budget setting community consultation update:**

Unfortunately, despite widespread advertising via the news sheet, posters, website and social media, turnout for this event was poor. The Chair, Deputy Chair and Clerk gave a PowerPoint presentation and the public who attended asked some poignant questions about how the Town Council is funded and how it operates in relation to the larger authorities.

Poor public transport connections was again raised, the overall appearance of the town and Council communication with residents.

**Action:** Members agreed that a review of how the Council communicates with the community should be discussed at full Council and welcomes any suggestions from the public.

**23/125. Budget Analysis Report 01.08.23 – 31.08.23:** Noted

**23/126. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statements 01.08.23 – 31.08.23:** Noted

**23/127. Chair's Announcements:**

Cllr Clarke: The Town Council should host more Councillor Surgeries and she has started work on conducting a new Youth Strategy consultation. A questionnaire will be used to consult with Year 6 groups from the primary schools and the three Buckfastleigh youth clubs.

Cllr Clarke: Proposal to buy in some professional football coaching from Torquay United who also provide a welfare service to the young people playing football to discuss racism, bullying, gender discrimination etc.

**23/128. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting:**

Cllr Walker-Haworth: The home education group is now using the Youth Club on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 2.00pm to 3.00 pm and would like to be involved with the above youth consultation.

Cllr Bailey: The Football Club has taken the action to install lockable gates at the Football Club due to increased incidents of antisocial behaviour, drug use, bikes cutting up the turf and dogs fouling on the pitch.

The Clerk advised that the external audit of accounts for 2022/23 have been passed with no matters to be brought to the attention of the council. The Clerk was thanked for her work and due diligence.

The long-awaited refurbishment of the Furlong Close children's play park at Buckfast is due to commence this week.

Cllr Phillips: Strode Road has been resurfaced.

There is no further news regarding the planning application for the proposed Timbers Road site although Devon County Council Highways has objected due to flood risk issues.

**23/129. Summary of Key Messages:**

Clerk to action.

Meeting closed at 8.55 pm.