

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 13th September 2023 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: Paul Georghiades (Chair), Huw Cox, John Bailey (arrived at 7.20pm), Ron Fox and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

Press: None

23/17. Apologies for absence: None

23/18. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

23/19. To approve and sign the minutes from the Finance Committee held on 14th June 2023:

Minutes signed by Cllr Georghiades. Proposed by Cllr Cox and seconded by Cllr Georghiades.

23/20. To receive the current Grants Report for 2023/24: Noted.

23/21. To review the Town Council grants process:

The current applications and policy and guidance documents for the Perennial, Larger and Smaller Grants have been in use since 2018.

Members agreed that all documents are fit for purpose and do not require amendment but greater feedback from successful applications is needed with evidence of progress and expenditure.

Action: Clerk to pursue End of grant report forms.

Decision: All Members agreed to continue with the current set of grant documents.

23/22. To review ring-fenced budgets and make recommendations to full Council for the 2024/25 budget:

The Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor recommended greater use of the ring-fenced budgets and to reduce the number currently held.

Some ring-fenced budgets will be used during 2023/24 and any unspent funds will go into the year-end surplus.

Decision: Recommendations to full Council to resolve - to use the Climate and Environment budget during this financial year and have a new Climate and Environment 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.

23/23. Initial 2024/25 budget discussion pending the public consultation event scheduled for 27th September 2023:

Cllr Cox: All 3 youth groups in the town have met to look at a more unified approach and divide funding proportionate to need. TRAYE receives annual funding from the Town Council budget and provide evidence of match funding to secure funds from other sources. The Bungalow Youth Project (BYP) and Buckfastleigh Youth Club must apply to the Town Council for grants. The BYP has also received a substantial lottery grant. Buckfastleigh Youth Club is a traditional organisation that only meets once a week but is very popular and meets local need for a specific age range.

Cllr Fox: Funding must be in accordance with need not how many times the facility is open and how many young people attend.

Cllr Georghiades: Where is the help most needed?

The Clerk confirmed that the Town Council is committed to 3 further years for funding to Victoria Park, but will they be asking for further energy costs support? This must be addressed when setting the new budget.

Action: Clerk to email the Victoria Park treasurer re estimated energy costs for 2024/25.

Cllr Bailey stressed that it is important to consult with the community but not raise their expectations as to what can be provided on a limited budget.

Members agreed that the focus of the new budget will be Victoria Park, the Town Hall and youth provision.

23/24. Questions and comments from the public: No public in attendance.

23/25. Items requiring urgent attention: None

Meeting closed at 7.55 pm.