

# BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 7.00pm.**

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

**In attendance:** Becci Eriksson (Better Places – Be Buckfastleigh)

**Press:** None

**23/26. Apologies for absence:** None

**23/27. Councillors invited to declare any interests:** None

**23/28. To approve and sign the minutes from the Finance Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023:**

Minutes signed as correct by Cllr Georghiades.

For clarity Members discussed the proposal for a specific youth fund rather than grants to individual organisations who provide a youth service in the town. Agreed that this needs further consideration before any proposal can be presented to full Council.

**23/29. To receive the current Grants Report for 2023/24:** Noted.

**23/30. End of year report for Hello Summer youth activities programme with representation from Better Places – Be Buckfastleigh:**

A written report had been circulated to all Members prior to this meeting and a short slideshow was shown.

Becci Eriksson: It has been a busy summer despite having poor weather at times. This year both the primary school and St. Luke's Church were used as indoor venues. Hot lunches were provided daily and trips to locations outside of Buckfastleigh such as The Box in Plymouth were very popular.

Hello Summer now runs across 3 towns, Buckfastleigh, Bovey Tracey and Bridgetown in Totnes and has become a community building event. The highest attendance is in Buckfastleigh, and all Town Council funding is used solely for the activities in Buckfastleigh. HAF (the Government Holiday Activities Food programme) provides approx. £12,500 towards Hello Summer and the Town Council provides an annual contribution of £10,000.

Many families struggle to provide entertainment or food during the school holidays and the eligibility for free school meals has been reduced. Activities and trips are open to all children within the TQ11 postcode not just those who receive free school meals in the interests of fairness.

Local providers are used to host activities, provide food and transport and HAF conditions state that at least 4 hours of activities must be provided each day. Funding is not guaranteed, and Better Places must apply annually. The amount received for this year was less than 2022 which is why the programme was reduced to 4 weeks in the summer. Some activities were bookable

in advance, but most activities are on a first come first served basis.

All sessions are free, but some parents/careers may pay a donation if they wish. Activities are regularly reviewed by the team to see which were the most popular and feedback from parents and children are evaluated when drawing up the next programme. Generally, trips to other locations such as a museum, crafting, karaoke, and family bingo were the most popular in 2023.

It was noted that the Town Hall was not used this year as the primary school has better provision and space for catering and the Town Council did not on this occasion receive any promotional material which was disappointing.

Becci was thanked for her report and left the meeting.

**23/31. To receive and discuss the first draft of the 2024/25 budget – including estimated energy costs for Victoria Park:**

The Clerk explained that she has removed the Wellbeing budget due to unspent funds in the ring-fenced reserve and added a new Climate and Environment revenue expenditure budget for the proposed new Tetrapax recycling facility, a second Green Fair and other 'green' initiatives.

Cllr Bailey: Provision is needed for the Town Hall roof repairs.

The Clerk confirmed that there is a Town Council ring-fenced emergency fund if needed.

Members examined the budget headings and made the following recommendations:

- To increase the Town Hall grant – Clerk to calculate
- To increase the Hello Summer fund – suggest £500
- To increase the Mayor's Good Causes fund – suggest £50
- Suggestion to carry over the remainder of the ring-fenced energy fund (if any) for the swimming pool subject to clarification by the Victoria Park treasurer.

**Actions:** Clerk to contact the Victoria Park treasurer and request confirmation of the energy spend for 2023/24 and estimated energy costs for 2024/25 to support budget calculations. Clerk to draft a revised budget as detailed above with an estimated 2.75% proposed increase to the precept for recommendation to the November Town Council meeting.

**23/32. Questions and comments from the public:** No public in attendance.

**23/33. Items requiring urgent attention:** None

Meeting closed at 8.15 pm.