

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15th January 2025 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: Sue Clarke (Chair), John Bailey, Steven Burch, Joanna De Groot Marzec, Paul Georghiadis, Sylvee Phillips and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

In attendance: Cllr Stuart Rogers (Teignbridge District Council). 2 members of the public.

Press: None

25/171. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Ron Fox, Jack Major (Teignbridge District Council) and John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council)

Councillors invited to declare any interests: Cllr Sue Clarke as a Victoria Park trustee regarding Agenda item 8 – request to transfer the remaining ring-fenced energy grant to the swimming pool.

25/172. To approve and sign the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 20th November 2024 and review actions from these meetings and review actions from this meeting:

Minutes signed by the Chair.

No outstanding actions.

25/173. Questions and comments from the public.

A member of the public complained about the poor standard of service from the new pharmacy to the town including late prescription delivery and consistent lack of stock on the shelves.

The Town Council confirmed that they have no authority over how companies run their businesses and suggested that they write to the company and local MP.

Cllr Stuart Rogers informed the meeting that the Manager at the Ashburton Chemist is trying to help and escalate the issues to the chain of command. He would also contact Mel Stride, MP.

In the short-term complaints can also be directed to Buckfastleigh Medical Centre.

25/174. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to the meeting.

Cllr Stuart Rogers is working with Devon Libraries to provide access to books and reading material from Buckfastleigh Library for Buckfast residents who may not have transport.

Cllr Stuart Rogers informed the meeting that Teignbridge District Council (TDC) had remembered Cllr Huw Cox on the 1st Year Anniversary of his untimely death.

The new Ring and Ride service has now been signed off and will work from Newton Abbot. The buses are on order. Volunteer drivers and administrators are being sought who will all be given training. They are also looking for a site to accommodate the buses within the Buckfastleigh and Ashburton area.

Sites for new social housing are being sought from landowners. A working party in relation to housing includes Teignbridge District Council, Dartmoor National Park and the Community

Land Trust. New plots of land are needed due to a shortage in social rented accommodation. Much of Dartmoor is Duchy owned land. Private landlord rents and no-fault evictions costs are too high and often only single rooms are available.

The Household Support Fund is still open. Residents can call Teignbridge District Council if they have no internet access.

The Government has now closed the Pension Credit Helpline.

Cllr Rogers is waiting for feedback following the Teignbridge District Council Public Toilet Consultation.

Cllr Joanna De Groot-Marzec arrived at 7.25pm.

Cllr Rogers has received reports of residents sleeping in cars, vans and caravans. He will be meeting with partner agencies to discuss a way forward.

25/175. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest.

None.

25/176. To review the Buckfastleigh Police Report for December.

Noted.

25/177. The Buckfastleigh UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update.

The Town Clerk gave an update and thanked Cllr Burch in relation to all the work he has undertaken regarding the refurbishment of the Visitor Centre.

Cllr Clarke stated that it was difficult to access information from Teignbridge District Council.

A meeting between the Town Council and the TDC councillor who is responsible for the assets portfolio could potentially take place in March.

25/178. To consider the transfer of the remaining Town Council energy grant to Victoria Park following discussion with the treasurer at the Town Council meeting held on 20th November 2024 and request further information.

There were questions regarding Hello Summer's expenditure on hiring the swimming pool. It was queried why Hello Summer consulting, advertising and expenditure were listed in costs and not income.

Decision: Cllr Paul Georghiades proposed releasing the remaining £7,475 which was seconded by Steven Burch with all Members present in agreement pending clarification of the above to Cllr Georghiades as Chair of the Finance Committee.

25/179. Initial comments re the English Devolution White Paper published 16 December 2024 and proposed Local Government reorganisation.

The Government has issued instruction for two tier structured local authorities to change to one tier. All authorities in Devon have come up with proposals and the proposal to have one Mayor to cover both Devon and Cornwall has been rejected by Cornwall Council.

It would be difficult to hold Devon County Council Elections in the middle of this and there are cost implications for just one year term of office. Some councillors are leaving or retiring, and

new members will not have had the time or experience to interpret all the information.

The leader of Teignbridge District Council is keeping members up to date. The proposals will also require a restructuring of employees and their roles.

Cllr Stevens Burch stated that it is high risk strategy and restructuring does not necessarily improve services.

Dartmoor National Park is also excluded from the proposal which may impact their role as a planning authority.

25/180. Budget Analysis Report 01.12.24 – 31.12.24

Noted.

25/181. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.12.24 – 31.12.24

Noted.

25/182. Multi-Pay Card Statements October 2024 to December 2024

Noted.

25/183. Quarterly Bank Reconciliation October 2024 to December 2024

Signed by Cllr Paul Georghiades.

25/184. Chairs Announcements.

Cllr Sue Clarke attended the street carol singing event on Christmas Eve. She was also interviewed on BBC Radio Devon regarding the Town Council annual free Christmas meals initiative and the positive publicity surrounding it.

25/185. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting.

Cllr Burch stated that the Film Institute was using Buckfastleigh for filming and that one of the requirements to be included on their register as a film location is access to toilets which is relevant to the TDC public toilet consultation.

Cllr Georghiades has been interviewed regarding the evaluation of MIC (Moor Imagination Collective) and whilst he confirmed that the Town Council was broadly supportive, as a council we must have regard to following due process regarding supporting all businesses in the town.

Cllr Clarke informed the meeting that because of the Cost-of-Living event, domestic abuse training will be offered free to professionals such as hairdressers to offer support and safeguarding. The event will take place in the Town Hall on 6th March 2025 with Teignbridge CVS facilitating.

Cllr Phillips referred to the warm space designation in the town which includes the Valiant Soldier and the Social Supermarket.

There have been reported issues of parking problems for the Social Supermarket now that it has moved to the Town Hall.

Action: Warm spaces to be listed on the Town Council website and social media page.

Cllr Bailey referred to the potholes at the Football Club Car Park which are dangerous for both vehicles and pedestrians. As the landlord TDC are responsible for maintenance and repair.

25/186. Items requiring urgent attention.

None.

25/187. Summary of Key Messages

Clerk to do.

Meeting closed at 8.38pm.