

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 18th December 2024 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: Sue Clarke (Chair), John Bailey, Steven Burch, Paul Georghiadis, Ron Fox, Sylvee Phillips and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

In attendance: Cllr Stuart Rogers (Teignbridge District Council). 1 member of the public.

Press: None

24/155. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Joanna De Groot-Marzec & John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council)

Councillors invited to declare any interests: Cllrs Sue Clarke and Ron Fox re Victoria Park – Agenda item 16.

24/156 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.

Actions

- A thank you letter on behalf of the Town Council has been sent to Teignbridge Citizens Advice regarding the weekly outreach service at the Foodbank on Friday mornings.

24/157. Questions and comments from the public.

None.

24/158 Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to the meeting.

Questions to Cllr Stuart Rogers by Cllr Sue Clarke from constituents.

The Devon County Council Election scheduled for May 2025 may be deferred due to the Devolution White Paper proposals.

Concerns were raised regarding the lack of attendance at meetings by Cllr Sarah Khan.

Stuart Rogers said that the deadline for Pension Credit applications was Friday 20th December. The Department for Work and Pensions had provided extra resources as well as a helpline. There was also additional support being provided at Ashburton Post Office and Buckfastleigh Library.

The Household Support Fund is still open.

The Connectivity Fund application has been submitted and awaiting due diligence to be done. The new Ring and Ride Service for rural areas which will be funded from this has been agreed in principle. Liability would be with the Newton Abbot Community Transport Company. Maintenance costs will be covered for 5 years.

Cllr Phil Shears will be visiting the Ward and Teignbridge District Councillor David

Palethorpe is to look at assets and how these can be transferred over to the parishes. Grant funding will also be required but assets that continue to raise revenue such as car parks will not be handed over.

Teignbridge District Council (TDC) would still like to hear from landowners who have land that may be suitable for housing development.

24/159. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest.

None.

24/160. To review the Buckfastleigh Police Report for November.

There is a noted increase in recorded crime in Buckfastleigh but poor attendance by the public at the monthly Police Surgeries held in the Town Hall.

Teignbridge District Council Cllr Jack Major arrived at 7.35pm.

Cllr Paul Georghiades proposed to invite Police Officers to the meeting in the New Year to look at how information is provided to the Town Council.

Action: Clerk to invite a police representative to this meeting.

Cllr Jack Major stated that the Devolution White Paper has been published and if approved would lead to significant change in local government.

24/161. The Buckfastleigh UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update.

The Clerk gave an update regarding progress. An update will be published as part of the key messages for this meeting. What is being done as part of the Gateway Project should also be highlighted.

24/162. To discuss the expenditure of Community Infrastructure Levy Receipts.

It was suggested that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts are spent on the refurbishment of Room 2 to compliment Room 3. It was noted that the relocation of the Social Supermarket to the Town Hall will increase footfall and raise the profile of these two rooms.

Decision: It was proposed to spend both receipts of £2,738.10 to this effect. Resolved unanimously.

24/163. Annual review of Financial Regulations.

Minor amendments noted. Adopted unanimously.

24/164. Annual Review of Assets, Risk Assessment and Internal Control 2024/25.

All three documents adopted unanimously.

24/165. Review of Interim Audit Report 2024/25.

The Town Clerk was thanked for her work on the interim Audit.

24/166. Budget Analysis Report 01.11.24 – 20.11.24

Noted.

24/167. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.11.24 – 30.11.24.

Noted.

24/168. Chairs Announcements.

Cllr Sue Clarke and the Clerk attended the annual Rowcroft Celebration of Christmas at Buckfast Abbey.

Cllr Sue Clarke also attended the Buckfastleigh Primary School Christmas Carols event.

24/169. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting.

Cllr John Bailey reported that the tennis court players use the Football Club toilets and that the flood lights are no longer working so tennis can only be played during the day.

He also reported that there are numerous potholes in the Football Club car park and that TDC own the land and entrance.

The Teignbridge District Council Public Toilet questionnaire was referred to. It was felt that it was poorly worded, and it would be a breach of duty and human rights to propose to close the toilets. Members agreed that there was no need to ask these questions and that it was a waste of public money to conduct the survey when this matter should not be up for discussion.

A total of 61 households have requested free Christmas meals from the Town Council this year.

24/170. Items requiring urgent attention.

It was reported that swimming pool revenue for the 2024 season had decreased and that energy costs have risen. There is also an issue with the energy company who refuse to accept the pool is not open and heated all year round.

The Bungalow rent is set under the terms of their lease, but it was suggested if it is increased it would help support the running of Victoria Park. Cllr Fox as a trustee stated that there needs to be a variation of the lease to permit a rent review. The question was asked if the Bungalow Youth Project would be open to a variation?

Cllr Clarke, who is also a trustee confirmed that there would be safeguarding issues around who could use/hire the Bungalow which is currently unoccupied during the day.

The pool continues to organise fundraising activities and has regular subscribers and are always seeking donations. They are also training a lifeguard to write grant applications.

Members agreed that more evidence is needed regarding the requested use of the remaining ring-fenced energy reserve held by the Town Council. A basic current statement for the benefit of the newer Councillors would be helpful in reaching a decision. Cllr Steven Burch stated that funding could be matched. It was not clear that it is needed right now although they would agree in principle, subject to further information being provided.

Action: Clerk to contact the Victoria Park treasurer for further information to be brought to this meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.33pm.