

# BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.00pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Paul Georghiades (Chair), Steven Burch, Ron Fox and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

**In attendance:** Cllr Sue Clarke and Joanna De Groot-Marzec

**Press:** None

**24/16. Apologies for absence:** Cllr John Bailey

**24/17. Councillors invited to declare any interests:** Cllr De Groot-Marzec declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 5 as the Chair of the Buckfastleigh Christmas Fair Committee

**24/18. To approve and sign the minutes from the Finance Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024:**

Minutes to be signed by Cllr Georghiades outside of this meeting due to one minor amendment.

**24/19. To receive the current Grants Report for 2024/24:** Noted

**24/20. Initial discussion following receipt of two larger grant applications with recommendations to full Council:**

Two applications from the Christmas Fair Committee have been received one for the Victorian Carousel at £2,000 and one to assist with core costs at £1,500

Cllr De Groot-Marzec explained that funding streams for this Christmas are lower than last year which is likely to impact the projected income.

Members agreed that the fair is very popular, attracts a lot of visitors from the town and surrounding communities and that the carousel is a unique addition.

**Decision:** The Finance Committee can confirm that all supporting documents and evidence has been received and that they are minded to recommend this application to full Council.

**24/21. To review the grants process:**

Councillors agreed that the applications and policy guidance for the Perennial, Larger and Smaller Grants are adequate but to change the “Who will benefit?” question to “What need in the community will be met and what outcome do you expect?” and to add an additional question “Is there any other group in Buckfastleigh that already offers this service?”

Members also agreed that groups must not use personal bank accounts to receive grant funding.

Decisions on all applications should be made in a Part II session to avoid causing the applicant(s) embarrassment and anxiety followed by a decision in writing by the Clerk.

Larger and Perennial Grants will be examined by this committee and if valid recommended to full Council for a decision.

Member votes to be recorded by the Clerk.

Application decisions to be recorded when the meeting returns to Part I to comply with transparency.

**Action:** Clerk to circulate amended applications. Cllr Georghiades to draft a questions sheet for councillors to refer to when discussing applications with applicants.

**24/22. Budget discussion following public consultation and to review the first draft of the 2025/26 budget and RFO Report:**

Members are aware that raising the precept is never a popular or welcome decision but following the gradual erosion and cancellation of services by the larger authorities and decreasing government funding it is essential that the Town Council continues to promote the town and keep it alive by supporting local groups and organisations.

The recommendations in the RFO report were agreed and it was highlighted that by raising the precept from £156,100 to £172,250 equates to a Council Tax rise of 7.80% for a Band B property from £103.43 per year to £111.50 or in real terms £8.07 per annum or just over 15p per week.

**Decision:** Recommendation to the November Town Council meeting to resolve as detailed with a report to be published from the Chair to the community.

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

**24/24. Items requiring urgent attention:** None

Meeting closed at 8.10 pm.