

# BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

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## **Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026 at 7.00pm.**

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

**In attendance:** Cllr Jack Major (Teignbridge District Council), Cllr Stuart Rogers (Teignbridge District Council and Devon County Council) arrived at 7.15pm, Chris Khan, Flood Risk Engagement Officer (Environment Agency) and 2 members of the public

**Press:** None

**26/176. Apologies for absence:** Cllrs Ron Fox and Ben Leaney (Buckfastleigh Town Council)

**Councillors invited to declare any interests:** None

## **26/177. To approve and sign the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and review actions from this meeting:**

Minutes signed by Cllr Sue Clarke.

**Actions:** No actions to discuss

## **26/178. Review of Buckfastleigh Emergency Plan with Chris Khan, Environment Agency Food Risk Engagement Officer:**

Chris explained his role with the Environment Agency and how he works with Town and Parish Councils and their communities to prepare for weather related emergencies and in particular where there is a risk of both river, coastal, underground and surface water flooding.

Different communities have different risks. The Dartmoor communities such as Buckfastleigh are vulnerable to fast moving and rising river levels together with flash flooding often with little warning or time to prepare. Whilst it is important to clear drains these alone do not have the capacity to cope with the volume of water.

It was noted that although the Town Ranger monitors surface water drains around the parish and removes debris above the grills he is not permitted to unblock the drain below the grill which often requires specialist equipment and comes under the remit of Devon Highways.

Community resilience is essential and as the 2012 flood demonstrated residents cannot always depend on the help of the emergency services within the short term if there are multiple incidents across the county. Residents and businesses need to look to their own resources and skills to assist which is why it is so important to have a group of volunteers who can help but without putting themselves in danger.

Buckfastleigh Town Council has an Emergency Plan but without volunteers it would currently be difficult to put this plan into practice without volunteer training and familiarisation with the equipment stored in the Town Hall. Venues have been identified but must be manned and the support of the local W.I is very welcome.

Chris also highlighted riparian rights concerning the maintenance of river banks and walls to adjoining properties and how some property owners are unaware of their responsibilities and

risk. He also referred to decreasing investment in bridge repairs due to Government funding cuts.

The Dartmoor National Park (DNP) Headwaters Natural Flood Management Project is an ongoing initiative where DNP are working with landowners, farmers and commoners to slow and store water whilst enhancing, restoring and maintaining habitat. The Dean Burn and river Mardle are included within this project

**26/179. Questions and comments from the public:**

None

**26/180. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to this meeting:**

Cllr Rogers visited Buckfastleigh on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January with a colleague and noted the high number of parked cars in the town for the time of day, indiscriminate and dangerous parking and speeding vehicles. He will be looking at Devon County Council (DCC) maps to identify the locations of speed restrictions, parking bays etc.

Due to the footprint of the town more parking spaces cannot be created to satisfy need so DCC will need to work with the public and he acknowledged that the proposed development at Barn Park will only exacerbate matters which he will point out when this application is determined by DNP.

Cllr Rogers has requested mobile speed cameras for Plymouth Road and other areas.

There will be a follow up meeting from the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025 when Council and Dartmoor National Park (DNP) leads met with representatives of some of the Dartmoor parishes including Buckfastleigh Town Council within the next few months.

DCC will arrange a Foster Carers recruitment and information event in the spring and South Devon Community College are being encouraged to appoint a student to the Youth Council

DNP will be celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year with planned events across the Park.

The Teignbridge Household Support Fund has now been renamed the Crisis and Resilience Fund with more guidance to be published shortly.

The Local Government Reorganisation bids have now been submitted to the Secretary of State and a 12 weeks consultation period for the public will be announced. There will be no decision until later in the year.

Cllr Major – pre-bid invitations for the new Town of Culture are being invited with £3 million awarded to the successful bid and 2 further £250,000 awards available.

Teignbridge District Council (TDC) are developing a new Health and Wellbeing Active Strategy looking at green spaces and what upgrading is needed.

The 2026/27 budget report will be circulated shortly. Cllr Major confirmed that the TDC Community Infrastructure Levy interest is held internally and is used for strategic reserves and specified in-house projects.

The Chair raised the question of TDC loans being raised against CIL receipts and not being spent on infrastructure which was confirmed by a senior TDC Officer at the meeting in

November. Cllr Clarke will raise this matter again at TDC full Council next month.

Cllr Bailey asked if Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is delayed will TDC still keep the public toilets open instead of closing them in April 2027?

Cllr Major confirmed that there is no plan to delay LGR.

Cllr Phillips requested clarification of the proposal to have pop-up businesses in Woodholme car park and how will this effect the number of parking spaces.

It was confirmed that pop-up mobile businesses would only visit for a day, use very little space and would not be in competition with existing businesses such as the coffee shops but would provide a business opportunity for local traders and a different experience for residents.

**26/181. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest:**

None

**26/182. English Devolution White Paper Update:**

Covered under District and County Councillors report.

**26/183. To receive the Teignbridge Citizens Advice Buckfastleigh Outreach Activity Report October to December 2025:**

Members agreed that the outreach service is providing a good service to Buckfastleigh residents.

**26/184. Budget Analysis Report 01.12.25 – 31.12.25:**

Noted.

**26/185. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.12.25 – 31.12.25:**

Noted.

**26/186. Multi-Pay Card Statements 2025 to December 2025:**

Noted. The Clerk referred to some difficulties using the credit card for purchases for the new cinema and that most items can only be purchased online.

**26/187. Quarterly Bank Reconciliation October 2025 to December 2025:**

Signed by the Chair as an accurate statement.

**26/188. Chairs Announcements.**

Cllr Clarke will be attending the next TDC full Council meeting to present her question regarding CIL reserves.

**26/189. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting.**

Following positive comments from the Environment Agency the Chair requested that the Clerk sends a letter of thanks to Gary Quest, the Town Ranger for his due diligence and flood prevention work around the parish.

Cllr Burch asked for a Part II session at the next meeting to discuss and review the options for the

future of the Town Hall following recent issues.

**26/190. Items requiring urgent attention.**

No items to be brought to the attention of Members.

**26/191. Summary of Key Messages**

Clerk to action.

**Meeting closed at 9.03pm**