

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Matters Meeting held in Room 3 at the Town Hall on Wednesday 15th January 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors: David Patrick (Chair), Andy Stokes, John Bailey, Sue Clarke, Huw Cox, Ron Fox, Darren Greep and Judith Hart (Town Clerk)

In attendance: 1 member of the public present

Press: No Press in attendance

20/91. Apologies: Cllrs Pam Barrett, Gwena Harman, Kate Kayley and Sylvee Phillips.

No apologies were received from Cllr Pamela Forbes

20/92. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

20/93. Questions and comments from the public:

A member of the public congratulated the Town Council for another successful Christmas Community meal but suggested further discussion as to how to encourage harder to reach residents to attend.

20/94. Minutes of the Council Matters Meeting held on 11th December 2019 and review of actions from this meeting:

Signed by Cllr David Patrick

Actions:

- Disposal of solar panels – Cllrs Cox and Fox to progress.

20/95. Budget Analysis Report 01.12.19 – 31.12.19: Noted

20/96. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.12.19 – 31.12.19: Noted

20/97. Quarterly Bank Reconciliation Report: Noted

20/98. Review of Meeting and Committee Structure:

Cllrs Stokes, Patrick and the Clerk had met to discuss the current meeting structure and how it is not working efficiently. It was agreed that there are too many meetings but with only one monthly meeting that can effectively make decisions.

The meeting structure had been changed to facilitate and encourage more community engagement through topic based forums and workshops, but meetings have continued to be heavily weighted with council business so there is not enough time or space to discuss and explore specific topics with the public.

As the meetings are now open to all councillors it was agreed that the differentiation between full council and committees was more of a historic one.

It is proposed to replace the current structure of one full council meeting and two committees every month with two full council meetings with one focusing on community matters and the other on council matters. Both these meetings must however be legally chaired by the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Council. This would free up a third evening slot for other council led activities such as community engagement workshops and working parties. Councillors would therefore have the option of being involved in organising or attending events which are of interest.

The personnel committee which meets infrequently would continue in its current format.

Decision: Recommendation to adopt the new meeting structure and agree a start date at the January full Council meeting subject to a review after six months.

20/99. Councillor updates regarding matters relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Greep raised the issue of poor lighting and signage at the entrance to the football pitch for access by emergency vehicles when meeting the air ambulance at the landing site.

Action: Town Ranger to carry out a site visit to ascertain what is needed to resolve this and liaise with DCC.

Cllr Cox had attended the recent meeting about the proposed cuts to the Devon Fire and Rescue Service and was pleased to confirm that under the current review Ashburton Fire Station will not be closing. Topsham and Budleigh Salterton stations will however be closed but personnel will be transferred to other stations in the vicinity such as Exmouth. Some stations will have fewer or smaller engines. More funding will be made available, but another review will take place in the future.

Teignbridge District Council (TDC) have proposed a 2.94% increase to the precept for 2020/21. Further information can be found on the TDC website.

The Town Ranger's recent report regarding severely blocked drains and gullies around the parish will be raised at the January full Council meeting as it is clear that no jetting has taken place and communication from DCC Highways is poor. The Clerk commented that the Ranger has repeatedly requested suitable training from DCC to undertake basic highway tasks such as the clearance of leaves in known sensitive areas, but this has not been forthcoming.

20/100. Items requiring Urgent Attention: None

The meeting closed at 8.26pm.