

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 18th June 2025 at 7.00pm.

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

In attendance: Cllr Jack Major and Cllr Stuart Rogers (Teignbridge District Council), 10 members of the public including those representing grant applications, and 2 children.

Press: None

25/57. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Joanna De Groot-Marzec (Buckfastleigh Town Council), Judith Hart (Town Clerk) and John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council)

Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

25/58. To approve and sign the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 21st May 2025 and review actions from this meeting:

Minutes signed by Cllr Sue Clarke.

Actions (Town Council Meeting):

- Cllr Stuart Rogers has a meeting in relation to the speed limit in Buckfastleigh on the 19th June and will provide an update to the Clerk.
- Cllr Rogers will add the Tennis Court lights to his list of questions for review at Teignbridge District Council (TDC).
- Cllrs Rogers and Major continue to look at programme options for defibrillators and more funding is becoming available.

25/59. Questions and comments from the public:

A member of the public asked about the possibility of speed bumps along Strode Road/Plymouth Road due to the number of animals killed on the road. Cllr Clarke explained that Devon Highways are the responsible body for that section of road and that it was unlikely that they would install speed bumps.

Diane Mallen from the Social Supermarket asked about the Woodholme car park toilet closure. Cllr Clarke will be attending a meeting at Teignbridge District Council where this matter will be discussed in July.

Chris England from Number 44 asked about the bunting and we were pleased to inform him that the bunting would be going up for a period of 2.5 months, thanks to the wonderful local Fire Crew volunteering their help when approached.

25/60. To consider 8 smaller grant applications.

- **Buckfastleigh Sports Club** – request for £500 towards the temporary repair of the shed that houses the machinery used to maintain the pitch and dog walking area. Cllr Georghiadis asked if the storage shed stays as it is will it continue to affect the machinery moving forward? The answer was “Yes”. Cllr Georghiadis then asked if it was not more sensible to address the issues with the store and spend the money on that?

- **Playground Arts CIC** - £495 for a new Arts project working with young people aged 11-16 years at the Moor Imagination Collective. This will explore drama and theatre. Group sizes will be a maximum of 14.

The applicant also requested £500 towards an immersive/interactive Theatre performance taking place this weekend. Ticket sales are going well with one performance sold out and few tickets remaining on the second performance. 30% of the income from takings will be given to the venue.

Cllr Georghiades asked about the numbers boundary, if the group is divergent and why the group size is not scalable? The applicant explained that with the needs of the group it would be too overwhelming to increase the size.

Cllr Phillips: What day does the group currently operate – “Thursday’s”.

Cllr Clarke informed the applicant that grant funding could not be used to pay wages as part of the application included a worker at £15 per hour and explained about project management.

The contribution would go towards the project and space. The applicant was unaware that the Town Hall has a stage.

- **Buckfastleigh Action for Nature Group (BANG)** - the group is requesting £500 towards running costs which includes insurance and producing newsletters. All members are volunteers. They have just held a very successful Open Garden weekend with over 250 people attending.

Cllr Phillips asked about the area of overgrown grass at the junction of Elliot Plain – a plan is in place to tidy up this area. She also asked if the group could encourage residents to tidy weeds in the street or become involved in carrying out the work themselves.

- **Be Buckfastleigh Social Supermarket** - application for £500. This would go towards running costs. They need to hire both ground floor rooms in the Town Hall every week as they need the space. The second room offers a social area with children’s activities and a warm space in colder weather. The suggested donation for a food bag is £4.50. This just about covers the cost of the food that they purchase. This scheme reduces supermarket waste.

Cllr Rogers asked if there had been an issue with the Enforcement Officer booking volunteers on Tuesdays when unloading the food outside the Town Hall and will raise this with Devon County Council.

- **Be Buckfastleigh Little Lambs** - request for £500 towards the running costs of the group. This is the only one of its kind for early years age children in Buckfastleigh. This group is free to users and receives no other funding.

Cllr Phillips: Could Be Buckfastleigh not make a small charge?

Many families could not afford this. When the original funding had ended Be Buckfastleigh trialled a donation basis, but this had not worked. Little Lambs follow a guided curriculum.

Cllr Georghiades: Why has Be Buckfastleigh lost funding and what other projects are on the horizon?

It was confirmed that the 3-year funding had not been lost but had come to an end and they believe the group is essential as many parents/carers cannot not afford to travel to pre-school facilities in other towns. Other funding sources continue to be sought.

- Representatives from the **Orchard Millennium Green Trust (OMG)** applied for £500 towards the annual Fun Day 2025 on the green. The 2024 event had paid for 80% of their costs and they had received a grant for the entertainer from the Town Lottery. It was very well attended and of course featured the popular Annual Duck Race. This request is for a contribution to cover the cost of hiring a local Jazz band.

Cllr Phillips: Why is the tea hut no longer open on Sundays?

OMG trustees explained that they had issues with the availability of volunteers and that each opening only makes £15-£20 at a time. They made the decision therefore to only open the tea hut at events. Their Annual General Meeting was only attended by 3 people.

- The **1st Buckfastleigh Scout Group** - £500 towards award badges for their members. The Scout Group currently have 80 members. They are heavily dependent on grants. Children are given badges to acknowledge achievements. Each badge costs 90p.

Cllr Georghiades: Could families contribute £1 once their members have received two badges?

It was explained that parents already pay a monthly fee of £14.00 for their children to attend.

Cllr Rogers: How many young people are on the current waiting list?

There are currently 40 waiting for a place.

25/61 Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Jack Major informed the meeting that Green Fleet upgrades were taking place with the aim at reducing operation costs by 51%. Tetra Pak recycling should be in place by 2027. Cllr Phillips asked if the vehicles would need to be adapted. Cllr Major replied that no adaptations are required.

Cllr Major will be attending the Parish Planning Forum and the Dartmoor National Park annual review.

Cllr Major was asked why the Tennis Court lights were off and agreed to investigate this.

Cllr Rogers is due to have local review meetings and visits with Donna Mason, Chief Executive of Devon County Council. He will meet with the Town Clerk and Chair to gain a better understanding of issues that affect Buckfastleigh.

Cllr Rogers will also be meeting with a local resident to discuss speed restriction limits in Buckfastleigh with particular reference to reducing the current 40mph limit on Strode/Dart Bridge Road to 30mph.

The ownership of the land that the Ram sits on is still not clear so there is currently a land registry search taking place. The hope is that once it is established the Town Council will be offered the land for £1.

Cllr Rogers is meeting with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer to discuss road issues and what money is available. Cllr Rogers believes that towns employing Town Rangers should have their insurance paid for by Devon County Council.

The Household Support Fund is due to be signed off next week.

Cllr Rogers will be meeting with Teignbridge District Council and Dartmoor National Park in relation to housing following the Housing Seeds survey.

He asked the Councillors for a suitable night to arrange a meeting.

There will be a further update from Dartmoor National Park and Buckfast Abbey in relation to the care village plans in Buckfast in the autumn.

Cllr Bailey read from a previous email and informed Cllr Major that the tennis court lights had been disconnected and that there would be no plans to reinstate them. Cllr Major will follow this up.

Citizens Advice – Cllr Rogers informed the meeting that himself, Cllrs Nutley and Major would be using some of their Councillor Community Fund to support a Citizens Advice service in Ashburton. Ashburton Town Council is now reviewing this too.

25/62. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest:

None.

25/63. To review the Police Report for May 2025:

The Police Report was noted.

Cllr Burch identified the most common incidents, and it was suggested that trends in crime are presented quarterly in the form of a graph or chart. All agreed.

Action: Quarterly report to be presented to this meeting.

Cllr Clarke would like to invite the new Community Beat Manager; Ryan Cook to a Town Council meeting.

25/64. Buckfastleigh Water Day Update:

A brief update was given by Deputy Clerk, Clair Stevens in the absence of Town Clerk. A site meeting had been postponed due to illness. Judith and Clair will be meeting with Emma Tyack, Dartmoor National Park, to map out the plan for the day.

25/65. English Devolution White Paper Update:

No update available.

25/66. Budget Analysis Report 01.05.25 – 31.05.25:

Noted.

25/67. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.05.25 – 31.05.25:

Noted.

25/68. Chairs Announcements.

The Chair was pleased to inform the meeting that she had delivered voting slips to both Buckfastleigh and Buckfast Primary Schools so that the children could participate in the vote for the naming of the Ram sculpture at the corner of Strode and Plymouth Road. 8 names were selected from 30 over put forward and voting is taking place online and by paper slip in J. Searles and son, Buckfastleigh Library and Buckfast Post Office who have kindly agreed to give out slips. Voting closes on the Monday 30th June and the Ram will be named according to the highest number of votes. Cllr Clarke would like a plaque made and a small ceremony to which the press would be invited.

Cllr Clarke has also spoken to the Head of the Primary School about First Aid Courses for children at the schools. This would be basic first aid for example how to call 999 and the recovery position etc.

25/69. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting.

Cllr Phillips attended the Parish Planning meeting. Cllr Clarke thanked her for attending.

Cllr Burch informed the meeting that the donation pot system at the Valiant Soldier was not really working. They took £200 on the opening night and very little since. Cllr Ron Fox suggested as locals do not pay that they could be made aware of the donation pot.

25/70. Items requiring urgent attention.

None

25/71. Summary of Key Messages

Clerk to arrange when she returns from leave.

25/72. Motion to move into a Part II (private) session to discuss items of confidential business in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Meeting moved to Part II.

The public and District Councillors left the meeting.

Meeting returned to Part I and closed at 9.35pm