BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15th July 2026 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: Paul Georghiades (Chair), John Bailey, Steven Burch, Rod Denley Jones, Ron Fox, Sylvee Phillips and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

In attendance: Cllr Stuart Rogers (Devon County Council & Teignbridge District Council), Cllr Jack Major (Teignbridge District Council) arrived at 7.10pm and 3 members of the public

Press: None

26/78. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Sue Clarke and Cem Luscombe and Cllr John Nutley (Teignbridge District Council)

Councillors invited to declare any interests:

Cllrs Rod Denley Jones, Steven Burch and Sylvee Phillips as trustees of the Buckfastleigh Trust (The Valiant Soldier Museum & Heritage Centre) Agenda Item No. 9

26/79. To approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 17th June **2026 and review actions from this meeting:**

Minutes signed by Cllr Paul Georghiades

Actions:

- The Clerk reported that Teignbridge Cycle and Walk Forum have confirmed that the Austins Bridge/A384 section of the proposed route is still being discussed with Devon Highways to address the safety concerns raised.

26/80. To approve and sign the minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council Meeting held on 1st July 2026 and review actions from this meeting:

Minutes signed by Cllr Paul Georghiades

Actions:

- A response has been received today from Teignbridge District Council's (TDC) Asset Department regarding further questions and requests for information from the Town Council which will be circulated to Members and responded to by the Clerk.

26/81. Questions and comments from the public:

Member of the Public: *How will the amalgamation of councils improve efficiency?*

Cllr Rogers: This was both an instruction and will be a decision made by Government. All Devon councils submitted proposals, but these were rejected. A Government decision is expected on Thursday 17th July. All 417 towns and parishes within Devon will be informed as soon as the announcement is made.

The public are not aware of devolution in Devon, but it has already happened in other counties, and we have looked at other examples such as Essex.

Cllr Denley Jones: Wales went through devolution nearly 30 years ago. It cost a huge amount

of money together with relocation of staff and redundancies but it is a good thing if the size of the new unitary authority is right.

Cllr Rogers: To give an example Plymouth would need Ivybridge, north of the city and the surrounding areas to meet the 300,000 minimum population criteria set by Government.

26/82. Questions to District and County Councillors and comments on reports relevant to this meeting:

Cllr Rogers will be attending a TDC meeting on 28th July regarding the proposed investment in some of the 37 play parks identified which includes 4 in Buckfastleigh.

The Clerk asked why TDC are suddenly wanting to refurbish play parks when these are the very assets they wish to transfer to the parishes and have stated that all assets are "sold as seen.?" None of the assets will be upgraded prior to handover and will not come with any funding or a proportion of the council tax already paid to TDC.

Cllr Rogers reported that more data is required before TDC can identify what support is needed in the private rented sector following the impact of the new Renter's Rights Act.

The £800,000 Community Infrastructure Levy fund allocated over 4 years by TDC in their budget for a Community Match Fund to support town and parish projects has already been oversubscribed, but TDC will not exist so will this be carried over?

The Teignbridge Crisis and Resilience Fund which helps low-income households is looking at ways to help with increasing energy and food prices. Cllr Rogers will be visiting a wholesale facility in Plymouth to look at how to up scale the purchase of food for the foodbanks instead of the current dependency on supermarkets. It is hoped that buying in bulk will help to reduce costs.

Cllr Rogers has also raised questions regarding Citizens Advice Funding and why it is funded by Devon County Council, Teignbridge District Council, Buckfastleigh Town Council and the Foodbank?

The new 20mph speed limit for Buckfastleigh will be introduced shortly with the announcement going to the press in August. The Plymouth/Strode/Dartbridge stretch of road is unlikely to be included in this provision. Traffic flow such as the one-way system is being examined separately.

South Devon Railway have been granted planning permission for their new restoration hub and carriage and wagon workshop which will expand their capacity to refurbish heritage locomotive rolling stock.

Cllr Burch reiterated to Cllr Rogers that the proprietor of Searles electrical shop would like to be part of the traffic flow discussion on behalf of the Business Forum.

Cllr Major confirmed that the pétanque court will be cleared by TDC and that the damage to the tennis court fencing was caused by a car. The driver has accepted responsibility, and the matter is now being dealt with by the insurers. The tennis court lights issue is still ongoing.

Cllr John Nutley as a member of The Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Hospital League of Friends has contacted the Chair and invited representation from the Town Council to sit on their committee.

26/83. Planning Applications for commercial sites and areas of significant development or interest:

None

26/84. To review the Police Reports for June to July 2026:

It was noted that following a request by the Town Council statistics regarding crimes against women and girls have now been included in this report.

26/85. Local Government Reorganisation Update:

Covered under Minute No. 26/81 above

26/86. To ratify the proposal and supporting documents for the Town Council to lease The Valiant Soldier Museum and Heritage Centre (The Buckfastleigh Trust) Garden (to be known as 'Alice's Allotment') for the purpose of providing micro allotments for the benefit of the community:

The Clerk presented 2 draft documents; a lease agreement between the Town Council and The Buckfastleigh Trust and a tenancy agreement between the Council and the tenant. Responsibility for insurance cover and public liability issues were raised.

Decision: Members agreed in principle subject to approval/amendments by The Buckfastleigh Trust trustees at their meeting scheduled for Monday 20th July.

Work to the allotments will commence in the autumn and will be advertised thereafter.

26/87. Budget Analysis Report 01.06.26 – 30.06.26:

A member of the public asked about tidying up the town for eg. the removal of weeds and cutting back hedges and how much the Town Council spends on grass cutting and where this is accounted for on this report?

The Clerk explained that the Council does not undertake grass cutting except in some small areas which is undertaken by the Town Ranger. We currently do not employ any contractors, and we do not have the authority or resources to cut back hedges which is the landowners responsibility.

The Council cannot give consent or loan equipment to volunteers to carry out litter picks unless the Ranger is present due to health and safety legislation.

26/88. Bank Payments Report and Bank Statement 01.06.26 – 30.06.26:

Noted.

26/89. Multi-Pay Card Statements April 2026 to June 2026:

Noted

26/90. Quarterly Bank Reconciliation April 2026 to June 2026:

Signed by the Chair.

26/91. Annual review of Town Council Standing Orders:

The Clerk highlighted the increases in financial controls and procurement.

Decision: Resolution to adopt – all Members in agreement.

26/92. Chairs Announcements:

The Chair confirmed that Mel Stride MP for Central Devon following a recent visit had offered his full support for the future of Buckfastleigh library following the consultation and successful campaign.

26/93. Councillor updates relevant to this meeting:

The new Camphill Devon café to be known as 'Café Neuro' on Fore Street will be open from the middle of August. Local businesses will be invited to the opening ceremony.

Cllr Denley Jones suggested that a Town Council community recognition award event could be re-visited to recognise the contribution of volunteers within the town. This was previously known as The Pride of Buckfastleigh award.

Decision: Agreed

A barn dance in aid of raising funds for the Town Hall will be held on Friday 17th July. The band has been engaged at no cost to the Town Hall, and the event will be run by volunteers.

26/94. Items requiring Urgent Items:

None

26/95. Summary of Key Messages:

Clerk to action.

26/96. 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:

- **To note the minutes from the Personnel Committee held on 8th July 2026.**

Meeting returned to Part I and closed at 8.06pm