BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd June 2026 at 7.00pm.

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

In attendance: Representative of Buckfastleigh Youth Club

Press: None

26/09. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Sue Clarke and Ron Fox

26/10. Councillors invited to declare any interests:

No interests to declare

Cllr Georghiades as Chair of the Town Council requested that an urgent staff matter is raised as a Part II session of this meeting.

26/11. To approve and sign the minutes from the Finance Committee held on 15th April 2026:

Minutes by signed by Cllr Burch

Actions:

- Minute No. 26/06. The Clerk confirmed that £6,000 has been transferred to the Business Reserve Account as agreed following the completion of the interim audit.

26/12. Initial discussion following receipt of one larger grant applications with recommendations to full Council and Grant Allocations Report 2026/27:

The Youth Club has a full repair and maintenance lease at 33 Chapel Street, Buckfastleigh until 2031for £2,000pa from the Diocese of Exeter. The building is Grade II listed and the Youth Club is struggling to raise enough revenue to undertake essential repairs. Currently there are two projects: firstly, to repair the wooden windows and secondly, to repair a leaking chimney stack which is affecting the interior of the property.

Following an inspection by the Diocese, the Youth Club has been given until the beginning of August to complete the above repairs which due to the urgency of the situation the repairs have already commenced.

The club is finding it very difficult to raise donations or submit successful grant applications as funding repairs does not meet the criteria. Revenue is therefore spent on rent, utilities and repairs to the detriment of purchasing equipment and new activities for the children.

Councillors were very sympathetic to the difficulties facing the youth club and offered a few suggestions regarding possible funding pots.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee can confirm that all supporting documents and evidence has been received and that they are minded to recommend this application to the June full Council meeting to award £1,500 towards this project.

26/13. To note receipt of the End of Grant Report on behalf of the Buckfastleigh Action for Nature Group:

Cllr Burch conveyed his thanks for such a comprehensive end of grant report.

26/14. To discuss how the Town Council communicates the implications of Local Government Reorganisation and transfer of Teignbridge District Council owned assets to inform our community:

The Government has rejected all the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) options submitted by the Devon authorities and will publish their final decision on 16th July 2026.

The Town Council acknowledges that the public are generally not aware or even interested that Devon County Council and Teignbridge District Council (TDC) will cease to exist and replaced by a Unitary Authority and how this will affect every household. There has been very little publicity about the implications of LGR, and the potential loss of non-statutory services. Members agreed that this must be communicated to our residents.

In the past face to face public consultation has been poorly attended. This however has not been discounted as a method of communication further into the process particularly with reference to the possible transfer of Teignbridge owned non-revenue generating assets/liabilities such as the public toilets and green spaces. The Town Council is committed to public toilet provision but the cost of this and other services must be communicated as none of these assets will be supported by a percentage of the existing Council Tax already paid by residents or a dowry. If the Town Council does not assume responsibility the assets identified may be sold and for eg. Duckspond/Hamlyns playing fields is the only significant green space which is still in public ownership and should be retained.

It was agreed that under Phase I any communication should be concise and attract the attention of the reader following 5 key points:

Clarify – explain the issue eg. LGR.

Agree – why it has happened – Government legislation to remove the two-tier system of Local government and replace with a Unitary Authority is seen as cost effective.

Reason – why should the Town Council act? To save publicly owned assets which may disappear for good.

Explain – how will the Town Council respond to this? Is this bad news or an opportunity?

Method - Members agreed that the most effective and personal message to the community would be a leaflet drop which can also be published on the website and social media.

Phase II should be a consultation regarding the assets listed by TDC for transfer together with the cost implications to the Town Council should they choose to adopt the assets already identified.

Action: Cllr Burch and the Clerk to draft a two-sided leaflet for discussion at the June Town Council meeting. Following approval, leaflet to be printed and delivered accordingly. Members also discussed representation at the Fun Day on Sunday 28th June.

26/15. Questions and comments from the public:

None, member of the public left the meeting.

26/16. Items requiring urgent attention: 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 returned to Part I and closed at 8.10pm