

# BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held in the Council Chamber on Wednesday 8th December 2016 at 7.00pm.**

**Present:** Councillors:- Andy Stokes (Acting Finance Committee Chair), Pam Barrett, Mark Maish, Linus McCloskey and Judith Hart (Town Clerk/RFO)

**In attendance:** Councillors Ron Fox and Greg Porter

## **Part I (Open to the Public)**

**16/66. Questions raised by the Public:** None

**16/67. Apologies:** Cllrs Neil Smith, Janet Jones and Fanny Jackson

### **16/68. Declaration of Interests:**

Cllr Pam Barrett expressed a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No 4) – Community Development Fund as Chair of the Victoria Park charity. Cllr Barrett agreed to take part in the discussion and answer questions, but suggested she refrain from voting on any recommendation regarding the application for funding from Victoria Park.

Members agreed that there is always a need for transparency, but Councillors would be unable to pursue projects on behalf of the town if they are excluded from the decision-making process regarding how the precept is spent. Councillors agreed that all members should vote on the applications with Cllr Pam Barrett voting last.

Cllr Linus McCloskey – a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items Nos 4) and 5) – Community Development Fund and the Elector Fund as a volunteer for the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

It was agreed to look at Agenda Items Nos 4) and 5) together when considering each of the five grant applications submitted. The total amount for the Elector Fund = £3,084 for 2016/17 and it was acknowledged that the Council is already committed to approximately £1,000 for the new weekly CAB service at the Buckfastleigh Medical Centre.

### **16/69. To consider and recommend applications for the Community Development Fund and the Teignbridge Elector Fund:**

Cllr Stokes read out an email from Cllr Fanny Jackson dated 8th December 2016 with recommendations to the Committee as to how the Community Development Fund and Elector could be distributed among the five applications received, which was noted.

#### **i) Dart Rock – Buckfastleigh functional fitness trail – application for £1,700**

Members were supportive of this creative and imaginative approach to creating a fitness trail around town, but agreed that the initiative needs further work to assess the level of community support for the project as well as identifying any risks and issues of using existing infrastructure for exercise

purposes. The current street furniture is either local authority or community owned and approval would need to be given to use it for other purposes. It is also possible that it may not be robust enough to meet the need. Planning permission may be needed for signage and public liability insurance issues should also be explored.

**Recommendation to January Town Council:** That the applicant works with the Town Council, Dartmoor Naturally Active and other communities where such trails have been created to work up a more detailed plan for consideration at future grant rounds.

**ii) William Pengelly Caves Studies Trust – Electrical work – application for £1,000**

The caves are a very important geological site of special scientific interest (SSSI) and attract considerable interest, are used for educational purposes and bring visitors to the town benefitting the local economy.

**Recommendation to January Town Council:** To apply for £1,000 through the Elector Fund.

**iii) Buckfastleigh Primary School – Playground enrichment project – application for £2,200**

**Recommendation to January Town Council:** To apply for £1,084 through the Elector Fund with the proposal that this is match funded by the Friends of Buckfastleigh School.

**iv) The Orchard Millennium Green Trust – Fencing repairs and improvements – application for £2,000**

Members acknowledged the importance of the OMG to the community and recognised the need to improve fencing around the site. It was noted that the trustees annual income seemed sufficient to meet the annual expenditure and that there was a significant excess in the trustees bank account. There was no indication as to what these funds will be used for or why they cannot be allocated for the repairs.

**Recommendation to January Town Council:** The Finance Committee supports the maintenance of the green as a community space, but agreed that trustees appeared to hold sufficient capital reserves to meet the cost of making the necessary repairs.

**v) Victoria Park – Funding for Victoria Park and Swimming Pool – application for £10,000**

Cllr Pam Barrett explained how the park and pool had previously been funded by Teignbridge District Council (TDC) from Council Tax receipts, but that this was no longer the case. Trustees have been successful in securing over £310,000 of grants for capital repairs and improvements but that the charity was struggling to meet annual running costs. TDC had been unable to give an accurate picture of running costs for the whole facility but it had always been anticipated that there could be a significant annual shortfall, especially in the early years. TDC had originally pledged £10,000 of addition support in year 1 to help bridge the gap, but had withdrawn this offer after the transfer of the trusteeship. As more capital is invested in the refurbishment and repair of this facility, risk and insurance costs increase. New pension regulations and the introduction of a

minimum wage has increased staff costs and the charity is obliged to retain a sinking fund or ring-fenced reserve as part of the Sport England funding criteria. The running costs for 2016/17 will be in the region of £43,000 with a projected income shortfall of £20,000. Cllr Barrett explained that the charity had insufficient funding to meet current monthly outgoings and would be unable to meet its financial liabilities up to the time it was due to open in May 2017 and could start generating significant further income. Unless additional revenue funding could be secured for the current and future years, the pool would need to close.

**Recommendation to January Town Council:** To award the full amount of the CDF (£10,000) to Victoria Park.

Further recommendation that the funding for the CAB for the remainder of this financial year is met from the Elector Fund.

**16/70: Items requiring Urgent Attention:** None

Meeting closed at 9.00pm.