

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Tourism, Recreation and Economic Development Committee Meeting** held on **Tuesday 5th April 2016 at 7.30pm.**

Present: Councillors: - Simon Rines (Chair), Pam Barrett, Fanny Jackson, Dan Simpson and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

In attendance: Cllr Ron Fox, Sheila Phillips (William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust – WPCST) and 1 member of the public.

16/01. Questions from the public: None.

16/02. Apologies:

Cllrs Janet Jones and Neil Smith
Sandra Coleman (The Valiant) and John Brodribb (South Devon Railway)

16/03. Declarations of Interest: None.

16/04. Items requiring Urgent Attention. To consider those items which, in the opinion of the Committee Chair, should be considered by the meeting as a matter of urgency (if any). To be taken at the end of the meeting: None.

16/05. To approve and sign as correct the Minutes of the Tourism and Recreational Committee meeting held on Tuesday 5th January 2016.

Signed and approved by Cllr Simon Rines.

16/06. Town Guide Update:

The Chair thanked all contributors to the new Guide and noted the recent criticism on social media. The comments raised highlight as to how the Guide is used and whether it is just focused on tourism. The Council does not wish to exclude local residents, but the Guide is currently being distributed to tourist information centres and attractions.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The Council would like to formally thank Kate Targett on behalf of the town for the huge number of hours she contributed voluntarily to the publication of the Guide and that her work should be highly commended.

The new Guide is more tourism focused to avoid duplicating the information now provided in the 'Around Ashburton' and the 'Business Directory' publications.

The Chamber of Trade should also promote shops and businesses in the town.

16/07. A38 Flyover Project:

Cllr Simon Rines: The entrance to the railway is an eyesore and does not encourage visitors into the town. This area could be turned into an opportunity with the use of public art such as murals and sculptures. It could be re-landscaped and the Highways contractor has been consulted regarding seeking permission to create parking.

There are several landowners, but most of the area belongs to one family and negotiation regarding the development of the site would be required.

Cllr Pam Barrett: Litter picking walks could be initiated although the rubbish under the A38

is creating a death trap and would require the use of a skip to remove the high volume of rubbish which has accumulated.

Cllr Simon Rines: Suggestion to promote the idea of an eco-garden with visitor information about local wildlife.

Cllr Pam Barrett: South Devon Railway would like to use the field adjacent to the railway as a car park with a riverside walk. The field is on a flood plain and not an allocated housing site. It is currently used for agriculture, but could be a sensitively landscaped car park that links to this project.

Traffic calming measures should also be looked at along Strode Road and Dart Bridge Road.

Action: Cllr Simon Rines to consult with the garage owner and Highways.

16/08. To discuss the improvements of signage around the Parish to encourage visitors:

Cllr Simon Rines: New and improved information boards and directional signage is needed.

Cllr Pam Barrett: The Dartmoor Leaf Fund could be used for infrastructure projects but this must include job creation as part of the eligibility criteria. There is also a Lottery funded project called the Power to Change which could be looked at to create an entire package of major improvements for the town. This would be a huge project.

Cllr Simon Rines: The recently purchased Salmons Leap site will see the development of a café, local produce shop and canoe centre.

Cllr Pam Barrett: Improved directional signage is needed at the Buckfast roundabout and the Council needs to identify what signs are required around the town.

Judith Hart: New signs will require planning permission and Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) does limit the number of signs that can be permitted within the Park.

Action: Cllr Rines to coordinate a new signage strategy with the potential for a map detailing what is needed. Clerk to seek advice from the planning authority.

16/09. New initiative to use a promotional campaign and examine potential funding opportunities to attract tourists to Buckfastleigh:

Cllr Simon Rines: Suggestion that businesses could donate to a tourist fund and that the visitor attractions should be brought together. The centre of town needs to be promoted and a Press trip could be arranged with a professionally prepared itinerary and the Council acting as the host. There is also the possibility of the Hounds of the Baskerville film being screened at Holy Trinity Church.

Action: Cllrs Rines and Jackson to carry out further research regarding a possible press trip and film/play screening.

16/10: To consider further improvement of the Town Council website to promote tourism:

The new Town Guide has been uploaded to the website, but this could be further developed and is a topic for discussion at a later date.

16/11: To discuss creating a promotional videos programme:

Cllr Simon Rines: Videos could be produced on specific topics such as wildlife and the caves. These could be uploaded to the website and social media sites.

Action: Cllr Simon Rines to consult with Jellyfish concerning production and funding sources.

16/12: Chair to invite comments from the local attractions and members of the Buckfastleigh Chamber of Trade represented at this meeting:

Sheila Phillips: *Following the theft and vandalism of fossilised bones from the caves, the WPCST has been working with the Natural History Museum and Birmingham University to create reproduction bones for the centre.*

Sheila has carried out a number of lectures which is encouraging visits from universities, palaeontologists and geologists who will be staying in the town and using local facilities. Devon Wildlife Trust will be hosting a Bat Day on 26th June and the annual cave centre open days will be held every Wednesday and Thursday in August. The Trust will also be hosting their own bat walks on Thursday evenings in August.

A Conan Doyle drama group will be visiting Holy Trinity and Cabell's tomb and playing an ad lib production in the town linked to this.

There is more publicity for the caves and new promotional material coming out soon.

The Trust is looking for 2 to 4 16+ young volunteers to help in August for reception duties, refreshments etc. The Council will help with the advertisement of this.

Cllr Pam Barrett: A river clean-up is being planned and volunteers are being sought to set up a litter picking group.

Cllr Fanny Jackson: A reward scheme for young people could also be created for litter picking.

16/13. Correspondence: None

16/14. Items requiring Urgent Attention: None

The Meeting closed at 9.18 pm.