

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

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

Present: Councillors: - Pam Barrett (Acting Chair), Fanny Jackson, Neil Smith, Ron Fox (Arrived at 19:42) and Clair Stevens (Town Hall Trust Administrator).

In attendance: Sheila Phillips (William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust – WPCST), Maureen Tuffnell (OMG and W.I.), Anne Werry (OMG), Geoff Pring (Buckfast Abbey Warden & Site Administrator), Nigel Evans (Buckfast Abbey, Accommodation Manager, Greg Porter (Newly elected councillor)

16/15. Questions from the public: None.

16/16. Apologies:

Cllrs Simon Rines (Chair) and Dan Simpson (Cllr Fanny Jackson would like it noted that all members of the committee should be informed if the Chair cannot attend)

John Brodribb (South Devon Railway)

David Field (Buckfastleigh Otters & Butterflies)

Nathilde O’Rapp (Jellyfish Productions)

16/17. Declarations of Interest: None

16/18. Chair to invite comments from the local attractions and members of the Buckfastleigh Chamber of Trade represented at this meeting:

Nigel Evans and Geoff Pring introduced themselves. Their work at the Abbey revolves around the Conference Centre and Accommodation. They would like to look at how each group could benefit each other in the future.

Actions:

- i) Councillors to arrange and commit to a visit to Buckfast Abbey to look at their accommodation and other facilities.**
- ii) Councillors to invite Nigel Evans and Geoff Pring to Buckfastleigh and guide them through a meet and greet of the local businesses.**
- iii) Greg Porter to create a “Cheat Sheet” as a guide and email it to Nigel or Geoff.**

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. The Natural History Museum hold 4700 bones from the Caves in storage.

Natural England has given permission to have 3D imaging done for the replacements after months of waiting. Members of Manchester University came to work in the caves. A mud slice has been obtained for analysis and this initially has shown minerals/new bones. Dating is in progress and it is hoped that climate markers can be established from the data. The theft has not put groups off visiting, it has added to the interest with the fact that it is being restored.

The caves will be doing their own Bat Walks with the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project. They have 18 walks planned on Wednesday and Thursday evenings throughout August. The Caves are looking for a Work Experience Volunteer to work at the Cave Centre throughout August. Minimum age 15/16 years old.

Ann Werry and Maureen Tuffnell: The Orchard Millennium Green, Tea on the Green Sundays are very successful. The café is open from 2-5pm every Sunday, rain or shine. They have improved the area with flower pots and thanked the local residents for clearing litter from the park.

Concerns were expressed regarding consumption of alcohol in the park and zero tolerance signs were suggested.

Cllr Pam Barrett: Victoria Park and Buckfastleigh Swimming Pool are going well. There are several new activities on offer at the pool and the Victoria Park Trust have also secured funding of £2000 to provide discounted swimming via the Food Bank and Medical Centre. The Dartmoor Skies, Starlight Swim event sold out in 48 hours. The pool is aiming to have a similar event with the Devon Wildlife Trust, Bat swim. This would also see the pool being a host centre for Bat detectors which would be free to use.

Aqua Aerobics has been very popular.

Next year the Pool hope to become a Lifeguard Training Centre. Several young Lifeguards have already been trained this season and it is planned to offer junior Lifeguard Training. Snorkel courses will also be available.

Fundraising to meet running costs is urgently needed.

The Pool are working with the Heritage Fund and the Young Roots Project which will see a story telling of the Park Heritage. The park celebrates 130 years next year and it is hoped that a film will be produced by 11-21 year olds to tell the story.

The skate park is set to be completed in two weeks' time and the play area work will start in September.

16/19. To approve and sign as correct the Minutes of the Tourism and Recreational Committee meeting held on Tuesday 5th April 2016.

Signed and approved by Cllr Pam Barrett.

16/20. To discuss the improvement of signage around the Parish to encourage visitors:

It was agreed in the absence of Cllr Simon Rines (Chair) that this discussion would roll over to another meeting.

The sign at the Railway directing visitors to town was raised as a member of the public had suggested on social media that this sign was poorly placed.

Action: Contact the Railway to ask if the sign can be moved. The suggested spot was closer to the entrance and bus stop.

Cllr Pam Barrett also suggested an evening similar to the litter pick walk where signs could be cleaned and cleared of brambles etc. The OMG representatives requested better signage to the public toilets.

16/21. Town Guide Distribution update:

The guides need refreshing in some areas and this has taken place over the last week when the Town Hall has been contacted. Members of local businesses attending this evening have taken more guides.

16/22. A promotional campaign and to examine potential funding opportunities to attract tourists to Buckfastleigh – update:

Cllr Pam Barrett: A promotional video is required It was also suggested that journalists could be accommodated and shown what Buckfastleigh has to offer by visiting the local attractions.

16/23. Creating a promotional video programme update:

Discussed under Agenda item no 8.

16/24: To consider further improvement of the Town Council website to promote Tourism update:

The website is being transformed, but does need more work. A link to other facilities via the website would be useful.

16/25: A38 Flyover Project Update:

No update in the absence of the Chair

16/26: Correspondence: None

16/27: Items requiring urgent attention: None

Meeting closed at 8.46pm