

Notes of the Public Forum Held on 5th November 2013.

Mr Mitchell spoke regarding the solar factory development at Buckhayes. An appeal regarding this site has been sent to the Secretary of State. To create a solar factory there will require the surrounding lanes to be widened by removing hedgerows to allow lorries access. There are no passing places on the lane near the proposed site and a difficult turn out of Bampton by the Quarrymans. The developer has suggested painting the fencing green in order to enhance the site, this will encompass 37 acres and stand 10 feet high. As yet no evidence has been provided which proves the value of the development against the loss of land. If it were to be given approval the development would impact on local life and tourism. The council agreed to write to the Planning Inspectorate.

PCSO Vicki Follett reported one recent burglary and one act of criminal damage in Bampton and reminded the meeting that the contact number for non-emergencies is 101. She was congratulated on passing her application to become a Police Officer.

Mr Woolley of Exmoor Rotary felt that the Fair had been successful and that the stalls catered for by the Rotary had gone well. The provision of lighting allowed trading to continue after dark and the musicians and street performers were well received. Approximately three thousand people attended and over five hundred cars used the car parks. The ladies from Cancer UK ran a very successful café. The auction was not well attended and Mr Woolley felt that it was fortunate that the pony sale was not held as this might have created further difficulties. The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks for Mr Woolley and the members of the Rotary particularly Mr Knagg and Mr Mount for their work at the Craft Fair and all the Stewards generally. The Chairman acknowledged the work done by them to make the Fair possible and also offered an apology to the Rotary regarding their complaint about a previous minute, which he felt was an oversight on his part. Mr Woolley also thanked Cllr Pope for all the hard work she had put in.

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Bampton Town Council Held on November 5th 2013.

1. Councillors present were Brian Smith (Chairman) Edward Tanner, Francis Stoner, Rodney Baker, Rachel Gilmour, Jean Pope, Keith Pitt, William Weston, and Jack Ward.

Cllr Ray Stanley attended and apologies were received from Cllr Polly Colthorpe.

Ms Amy Tregellas, the Monitoring officer for Mid Devon District Council was also in attendance.

2. Declarations of Interest. Cllrs Ward and Tanner declared a personal interest in The Bampton Heritage Centre. Cllrs Smith, Tanner and Weston declared pecuniary interests in Bampton Fair and Cllrs Stoner and Tanner declared a personal interest in respect of their interest in the Riverside Hall Committee.

3. Amendments to the Minutes of the previous meeting.

8h. It should be noted that both Lilian Edworthy and Diane Thomas remain the BTC representatives with the Bampton United Charities.

8f. Cllr Ward that this be amended to 'new explanatory leaflets will be published and paid for by the Parish Plan group'.

8.j It was requested it be clarified that the Rotary volunteers were not just be working in the Heritage Centre but also stewarding and supporting the Fair on a wider basis than suggested.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes.

Cllr Ward had passed the cheque for £500 to Bampton United Charities. He then received a letter in response, which he apologised for not having passed to the Clerk, from the Treasurer of BUC who thanked BTC for the donation, the first that had been received in one hundred years!

Cllr Stoner asked that the amended minutes from September and October be circulated to all councillors prior to the next meeting.

Cllr Smith reported that he had attended the Hard Choices meeting held by John Hart, Leader of DCC. He made known the concerns regarding development in Bampton although the school was now full up despite its recent extension. Mr Hart was not overly concerned and did not think that further housing development would affect the school adversely.

5. Ms Amy Tregellas spoke about the Code of Conduct. Since 1st July 2012 councils have had a choice of either the Code of Conduct created by the National Association of Local Councils or the MDDC version, which is slightly different. Irrespective of which Code of Conduct is adopted there are seven principles which apply to the behaviour of councillors in all cases. These are

- Selflessness - holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- Integrity - holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- Objectivity - in carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- Accountability - holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- Openness - holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- Honesty - holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- Leadership - holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Pecuniary Interests: these relate to the person as a Councillor or individual and their partner and cover business interests through employment or trade, land or property. The law is very clear that having declared a Pecuniary Interest the person concerned should leave the chamber and have no part in the discussion or the vote.

Personal Interests: It is appropriate to declare representation on other bodies, even when as a council representative, and acknowledge any issue relating to a friend or family member. The public should not feel that the position of Councillor is being used to confer advantage or favourably influence other interests. Having declared a personal interest under the MDDC Code of Conduct the Councillor is then allowed to stay for the discussion, propose or second a motion. They are however expected to refer to the seven principles given above and to act with integrity. These are statutory requirements and should be declared even when mentioned on the individual Register of Interests forms. With regard to the various responsibilities of members of the council, part of the consideration

regarding which Code of Conduct is appropriate relates to the Council remaining quorate whilst conducting business.

Complaints about councillors are dealt with by the Monitoring Officer. It is a criminal offence not to declare a pecuniary interest and the Monitoring Officer will pass information to the Police, disqualification from public office and other penalties may apply..

Cllr Stoner asked that details of relevant training courses on this subject be sent on to allow councillors to improve their understanding of this matter. Cllr Smith thanked Ms Tregellas for attending the meeting.

6 Ongoing business

a. The Heritage Centre. Having received a letter from the Katrina Munro on behalf of the Heritage Centre stating that they could not accept a loan as, the 'trustees' did not want to be guarantors of the loan, the Chairman suggested to the meeting that the offer of a loan or grant to the Heritage Centre be translated to a gift, with no responsibility to provide invoices for money spent or to repay should the project prove unsustainable although the loan would be made from public funds. Amy Tregellas asked the Chair why BTC were voting on this again when a decision had been taken and recorded on 7th September 2013? The offer and terms of the loan having been made clear in a letter to BHVC dated 13th September 2013. Ms Tregellas then read to the meeting her summary email which stated that the previous council had failed to observe due process regarding their offer to the Heritage Centre. She advised BTC that an auditable trail is absolutely vital and that invoices should be provided in response to any grant. The current proposal carries the same obligations and the same timescale as the lottery grant. However the paperwork which had been supplied to BTC by BHVC, as part of the application to claim the funds offered, did not provide a constitution of any sort, the names of the trustees or officers were not supplied, neither had a charity registration been made. The status of the organisation was therefore unclear. It was made clear to the meeting that the future of the BHVC was not dependent upon BTC funds and that the Heritage Lottery officers had worked with Ms Munro to create contingency plans to allow the project to go forward with or without these funds. It was agreed that a letter be sent to Ms Munro asking for confirmation of charitable status or otherwise, also copies of the constitution, business plan and full accounts be provided before the loan be granted.

b. Code of Conduct. Cllr Pope proposed that BTC continue to use the MDDC Code of Conduct (as adopted by the council in August 2012) this was seconded by Cllr Ward and agreed with Cllr Pitt voting against the proposal.

*Ms Tregellas left the meeting at this point, with the thanks of the council, and Cllr Pope asked that the agenda be moved forward to point 7 to allow Cllr Stanley to give his report.

7. Cllr Stanley's report. Due to the under recovery of £1 million front line services will definitely be affected from 2014. There will be no money available for sand bags next year and householders will have to make their own arrangements. Social housing has seen improvements in Mid Devon with new houses being built in Tiverton and Willand. MDDC had also given a grant to the Almshouse Trust to help with the conversion of a large property in Tiverton which will provide fifty new units for elderly people needing to live in a supported environment. Cllr Stanley then left the meeting.

* The meeting continued, returning to Ongoing Business.

c. The white horse which stood on the porch of the White Horse pub has been removed and is now in the safe-keeping of Mr Derek Aldridge. Mr Aldridge has cleaned the horse every month and repainted it yearly. Suggestions would be welcomed regarding a secure site for it in the future. Immediate suggestions are on the Stage or in the small island by the War Memorial. A letter of thanks to be sent to Mr Aldridge for his attention.

d. As mentioned in the Public Forum, the fair was considered to have gone well. The Chairman recorded very sincere thanks to Cllr Jean Pope and the Rotary particularly Mr Woolley, Mr Webster, Mr Weiss, Mr Berridge, Mr Knagg and to the football club members for helping with the erection of the marquees. Mr Woolley offered to sell an amount of coconut matting to BTC which had been used on the carparks. It was understood that this had previously been offered as a donation in lieu of a fee for hiring the marquee in the summer, records to be checked. The bench at the War Memorial was damaged by a vehicle during the fair and needs repair. Cars were also parked on West Street and Morebath Road which had caused problems, note for next year.

e. The Pump House and Millennium Green. Cameras and a monitor have been purchased, Cllr Smith has locks, chains and padlocks to be fitted to gates and doors. All quotes to be chased up asap. Thank you to Cllr Weston for trimming the hedge along the road. Although a request had been made to Devonshire Homes to remove the kerbing which makes the bridge to Lower Luke's inaccessible to pushchairs and people with mobility difficulties no reply had been received. Cllr Tanner suggested that it may be possible to move the gate to the far end of the bridge and create a slope from the high kerb down to the bridge.. Devonshire Homes and DCC Highways to be asked to reinstate fence which was broken by contractors machinery.

f. Sandbags. Two tons of sand are to be delivered later in the week and the bags are to be picked up from Tiverton. It was arranged that councillors would help to make up sand bags on Thursday evening 7/11/13 as one hundred and twenty bags are needed. Blights Hill has a spring running over the road which creates a dangerous stretch of road when frozen. This road is now a bus route so safe passage needs to be assured. As the parish boundary runs down this road BTC need to work with Morebath P.C to ask DCC to take action on this problem. Cllr Pitt reported that sand shovels have been stolen from the lock up. Checks to be made with the builders who used the lock up for storage. A padlock and keyholder need to be arranged.

g. The council was informed that a correspondence file is kept with BTC documents.

h. Riverside Hall. A meeting was held between the Riverside Hall Committee and members of BTC to discuss a lottery fund called Reaching Communities, which could provide all the funding required to fully refurbish the Riverside Hall. It was agreed that this was a very positive opportunity and a meeting was to be requested with Paul Tucker of MDDC who has plenty of current experience regarding bids to the National Lottery.

i. Castle and recreation ground. A further fund through the Heritage Lottery may allow the leisure facilities and history of the castle and recreation ground to be improved and updated and his opinion is also to be sought in respect of this. A number of councillors had visited the site and there would be a tremendous amount of work required to even establish what is there but the project was considered very worthwhile and of great potential benefit to the town. New swing seats have been ordered and quotes to reinstate the other swings and purchase a new bin will be discussed at the next meeting.

j. Public toilets consultation. MDDC are reviewing the number and cost of public toilets. Councillors felt that the facilities in Bampton should be retained and funded in the future. Bampton is considered by MDDC to be the fourth biggest town in Mid Devon and the toilets are as important to tourists as they are to bus and lorry drivers travelling across the county. Since the installation of movement sensors to operate the lighting they have become cheaper to maintain.

k. Christmas trees and lights. It was agreed that the Christmas lights should be tested to decide whether they were fit to use. A message had been received from Mr M Browning regarding an order he had made for Christmas trees and asking BTC to underwrite the cost of the same. Cllr Pope agreed to check the status of the order.

8. Finance. The collections from the car park boxes were 18/10/13 £184.25 and 25/10/13 £41.87. October's cheques paid: 3rd October HMRC Clerk's NI £52.85 Clerk's salary £664.51

November payments due;

Ken White Signs	Fair and car park	£ 457.20
Grant Thornton	Audit 2012 /13	£360.00
Mr B Smith	Security equipment	£239.99
Mr K Pitt	Security equipment	£72.00
Contact Radio Communications	Fair	£122.40
Filmbank Distribution	Riverside Hall Film	£ 99.60
K&S Fire Protection	Fire extinguishers	£30.00
Riverside Hall Hire	Volunteers evening	£10.00
J.Eyre	Clerk's salary, back pay & expenses	£851.66
Mr N Carder	Hollett Garden	£10.00
HMRC	Clerk's & NI	£53.95
Mr M Morgan	Toilets and Fair day	£510.00
Riverside Hall	Albert Fowler Room	£70.00
Mr R Evans	Internal Audit	£70.00

October receipts;

2nd October	Car park	£94.00	R/H Film	£97.00	RH Sanitary	£69.95
3 rd October	MDDC Precept	£18,096.00				

23th October Car park £176

30th October Car park £45.00

Bank statements at 30th October. HSBC £33014.49 c/r Scottish Widows £36531.39 c/r

Cheques not cashed: No: 101777 £15.51 No:101782 £500.00

Planning.

13/01475/FULL Brembridge Lodge. No objections. 13/01189/FULL 46a Brook Street. No objections.

13/01342/FULL 29 Brook Street. No objections. 13/01458/ADVERT Bridge House. No objections.

Cllr Tanner declared a pecuniary interest in the next application and left the room, returning after the discussion.

13/01454/FULL Courtyard Mews. No objections. 13/000185/MFU Buckhayes.CllrGilmour to respond

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday December 3rd 2013.