

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Parish Council was held at the Village Hall on Thursday 13th February 2020, commencing at 7.45p.m.

Present: Mr T Ansell (Chairman), Miss M Cresser,
Mr G Harris, Mrs L Sharp, Mrs J Ansell, Mrs A Hales,
Mr P Lawrence, Mr C Greaves, Mr D Godwin, Ms A Gallagher,
Dr R Longton, Village Hall Manager

In Attendance: Clerk to the Parish Council, Assistant Clerk, 10 parishioners

Apologies: Mrs T Hipwell, Mr B Neilson, Mr D Kellaway, Mr I Macfarlane,
Mrs C Jackson-Doerge, Mr I Morrin, Mr N Morse.

Open Meeting

The Chairman opened the meeting by reiterating that questions from parishioners were at his discretion and that a total of 15 minutes would be allocated accordingly. The chairman, to ensure fairness for all residents in attendance, stated that a maximum time of 3 minutes was allocated to everyone. The session would close after 15 minutes to ensure all remaining business upon the agenda could be transacted. Residents were reminded that upon closure of the question time, they were in attendance in an observational capacity only and to not cause a disturbance. The following questions were raised:

A local resident expressed concerns regarding the deliveries made to co-op being the same time as drop off for Garlands Junior School, resulting in parents parking inconsiderately. The Chairman suggested that liaison is held with the school to deter the inconsiderate parking. A request is to be presented to the police, via the BMNAG group, for presence to help ease the situation. The school is also to be encouraged to obtain "20 is Plenty" signage, on the understanding that it is advisory only and not enforceable. Investigations are to be made as to whether the delivery times at co-op could be amended.

1.02 To report, approve and record apologies for absence (and the reasons) from members of the Parish Council

Apologies for absence were presented, received and accepted from the following members:

Mrs T Hipwell, Mr B Neilson, Mr D Kellaway, Mr I Macfarlane, Mr N Morse,
Mrs C Jackson-Doerge, Mr I Morrin.

2.02 Declaration of any personal or financial interests

No declarations were made by members in relation to a personal or financial interest in any specific matter on the agenda for consideration.

3.02 Applications for Dispensations

There were no items upon the agenda that necessitated a member to present a written request for dispensations for a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

4.02 To receive a presentation from Burghfield Football Club

Representatives from Burghfield Football Club attended to provide a presentation to members, updating them on the current status of the club and their future plans, specifically in relation to their desire to obtain a own home ground and associated

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stadium. Questions were raised with regard to the level of investment potentially required for the project. BFC advised that until an area of land had been identified it was very difficult to specify. However, they hoped to remain within the parish and work alongside the parish council as much as possible.

5.02 **Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting**

Cllr Cresser wished to raise 3 points of order prior to the Chairman proceeding with the meeting, requesting they be upheld to ensure the smooth running of meetings. The points specifically related to the conduct of members at parish council meetings, being contained within the parish councils standing orders:

h. The Chairman will decide in which order matters will be heard. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking

j. Questions must be addressed through the chair. All those present will act respectfully and will not act in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens or intimidates others. Offensive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated, and Council reserves the right to curtail the contribution of and exclude anyone acting in this manner.

k. A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Cresser for reiterating the importance of ensuring everyone upon the council showed mutual respect and courtesy to each other.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 9 January 2020 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman. Cllr Harris requested clarification as to whether the Finance committee had co-opted any additional members and whether they were councillors or members of the public. The chairman advised it would be addressed at their next meeting, providing reassurance that due process would be followed accordingly with regard to the co-option process.

6.02 **Clerks update**

The Clerk provided a verbal update to members of specific action to date since the previous parish council meeting, advising the precept request had been submitted accordingly to West Berkshire Council.

The infographics poster showing the budget information had been completed and is scheduled to be included within the next newsletter.

7.02 **To receive a report from the Chairman on any events attended since the last meeting and other matters of interest to Members**

The Chairman advised of his attendance at WBC in relation to the new Housing and Land Allocation numbers, updating members. WBC have requested comments in relation to the three settlement boundaries applicable to Burghfield. The Chairman requested that each committee reviewed the boundaries, with comments prior to the 27th March 2020. <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/helaa>

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The chairman also reiterated to members the importance of the Code of Conduct every member upon the parish council had previously signed and agreed to adhere to. Points of note were:

- Listening to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers, taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.
- Valuing my colleagues and staff and engaging with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect between us that is essential to good local government
- Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public I engage with and those I work alongside

A member also agrees to the following obligations, when in office:

- He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory
- He/ she shall not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person

The Chairman reminded everyone of the importance of ensuring all members upon the council adhered to the principles and above all else, showed mutual respect.

Due to the scheduling of the District Parish Conference being the same day as the March Parish Council meeting, the chairman advised that the date of the March parish council meeting moved forward by a week to Thursday 5th March 2020.

8.02 Questions to the chairman previously submitted in writing

The following questions were presented, in writing, to the chairman, by Mr Graham Harris:

1. *Mr Chairman, one of the tenets/principles of the Localism Act is OPENNESS. Openness is equally applicable to both parishioners and councillors. At the most recent Community Committee meeting, it was announced that a person had applied to become the Village Hall caretaker and the intimation was that this person was to be appointed. When asked by a councillor who that person was, the information was not forthcoming and was in fact, seriously and persistently withheld. No reason was given why. Do you agree that us councillors are entitled to this information and that the decision to withhold it was wrong and nonsensical?*

The Chairman responded to the question as follows:

This is an unusual method of questioning, which I have only ever seen used previously by one other person. The way the question is worded concerns me considerably, especially as this point has been raised by more than one councillor, it is as though someone else is asking the question. Please be careful to be honest about who is asking the questions as I am worried there is some manipulation of councillors going on.

With regard to these specific questions I would like to make the following points before I answer your specific questions.

Do not quote random acts plucked from the air, if you do, please make sure they are relevant as this adds no benefit to the community who we are elected to serve as well as generally annoying everyone. The act you mention also has nothing to do with openness, it is entirely to do with the devolution of power to those in the best position to make decisions. This is I will come back to.

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With regard to the name of the people who applied to be caretaker of the village hall there are 2 important points-

1. It would be entirely wrong to discuss the personal details of who is applying for any role upon the parish council. Would you really expect everyone in a company to know your name because you had applied for a role? Imagine if you applied for a role and then it was minuted you were turned down because you did not have the skills or resources to do then job. This question was also asked in a "public meeting".

2. It was entirely correct that their name was withheld, the responsibility of whom the individual is employed by is the Parish Clerk and the Village Hall manager in this case. (Please refer back to the localism act) and nothing to do with you, any other councillor or any member of the public.

No I do not agree for one second that you are entitled to this information, I really do not understand what you think the role of Councillor is and I cannot believe you do not respect the people who are employed by the parish council to do their job. The decision to withhold the information is entirely correct and very sensible.

2. *Mr Chairman, can you tell me the name of the proposed Village Hall caretaker?*

I will not tell you the name of the person as stated above, it is none of your business. Please try and keep your questions in future to things that matter to wider the community we are here to serve and not the strange agendas that benefit no one.

9.02 To receive an update of progress to date from the NDP Steering Committee and a budget & timescale estimate for completion of the overall document

Dr R Longton updated members of progress to date, specifically in relation to the housing numbers following the release of the HELA document form WBC.

10.02 District Council Report

A written report was presented to members having been prepared by District Cllr G Bridgeman. District Cllr G Mayes was in attendance presenting a verbal report to members. Disappointment was expressed at the recycling rate presented by WBC within the district.

11.02. Village Hall

The Village Hall report highlighted the activities at the hall during the previous month, and the schedule of payments for February 2020, were presented by the Village Hall Manager.

12.02 To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 9 January and the draft minutes from 23 January 2020 and approve the recommendations therein

The minutes of the meeting of the Infrastructure Committee held on the 9 January and the draft minutes from 23 January 2020 received and the proceedings endorsed and adopted.

Members noted the discussions held surrounding the updating of the Village Design Statement, resolved by a majority vote with a review scheduled for 6 months.

13.02 To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Community Hub Working Party held on 16 January 2020 receive a verbal update in relation to the potential development of a Community Hub

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The minutes of the meeting of the Community Hub Committee held on 16 January 2020 were received and the proceedings endorsed and adopted. Members noted the revised designs for the hub. Details are to be placed upon the parish council website and noticeboards.

14.02 To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Community Committee held on 23 January 2020 and approve the recommendations therein

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Committee held on 23 January 2020 were received and the proceedings endorsed and adopted. Members noted the discussions relating to proposed modifications to the village hall to maximise both usage and availability for the community. Detailed plans are being prepared by the parish council appointed architect.

15.02 To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Communications Committee held on 16 January 2020 and approve the recommendations therein

The minutes of the meeting of the Communications Committee held on 23 January 2020 were received and the proceedings endorsed and adopted. Members noted the calendar of community events determined by the committee for the year ahead. The schedule is to be included within the next newsletter.

16.02 To receive brief verbal reports from Parish Council Representatives attending meetings of Outside Bodies to which they have been appointed

Cllr Cresser advised of her attendance at the Burghfield & Mortimer Volunteer Bureau meeting.

17.02 To give consideration to any proposals or specific actions identified by the various committees serving upon the council in relation to environmental issues within the parish

A reminder was presented to each of the committee chairman to ensure an agenda item is included for each meeting for consideration to be given to environmental issues within the parish and any proposals for subsequent improvements that could be made.

Members noted the newsletter was to be printed on recyclable paper for the next edition. An option for emailed copies of the newsletter is to be included within the next newsletter.

Members noted that all streetlights owned by the parish council had now been converted to LED's. Bulbs within all traffic lights had also been changed to LED's. The relevant committees are to give consideration to the following initiatives to determine if they could be incorporated within the parish calendar: Earth Hour, Earth Day, World Environment Day, Clean Air Day, Cycle to Workday, Zero Waste Week, Zero Emissions Day, Walk to school week/month.

18.02 Financial Matters:

i. Accounts Reconciliation as at 31 January 2020

The accounts reconciliation statements for the month ending 31 January 2020 were received and noted and are appended to the minutes.

ii. Accounts for Payment.

The items for payment shown on the list attached to the minutes are approved and as such sums are to be debited to the account of the Parish Council.

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19.02 To receive an update regarding ASB or policing issues within the parish and determine any action required

The minutes of BMNAG meetings are now displayed on the parish council website.

20.02 Matters for Future Discussion

Recycling within the parish and how the parish council could expand upon the facilities being provided.

Mrs J Ansell, requested the following question is raised at the next parish council meeting:

"It has come to my attention that sitting through the last few council meetings, questions raised to the chairman could have been answered before the meeting either by the chairman or the clerk of the council.

Going forward can I suggest that questions should be answered, where possible, within the relevant committees and only brought to the full council meetings when unsuccessfully resolved and require the full council's attention and time"

221.02 Clerks items for information

The Clerk advised members of the meeting schedule for February 2020:

Community Hub	-	20 th February @ 6.30pm
Communications Committee	-	20 th February @ 7.45pm
Governance & Finance Committee	-	27 th February @ 6.30pm
Infrastructure Committee	-	27 th February @ 7.45pm

Members were advised of the upcoming District Parish Conference on Thursday 12th March at the West Berkshire Offices. Members interested in attending are to advise the clerk accordingly.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21.10pm