

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday 26th November 2020 **Time:** 6.30pm

Place: Virtually via Zoom

Present: Mr I MacFarlane Mr C Greaves
Mr T Ansell Mrs J Ansell
Mrs C Jackson-Doerge Mr I Morrin

Attending: Clerk to the Parish Council 4 members of the public.

Apologies: Ms L Sharp

The Chairman reiterated that questions from parishioners were at his discretion, with 15 minutes being allocated. To ensure fairness, a maximum of 3 minutes is allocated to each individual only. The session will close after 15 minutes for all remaining business to be transacted. Upon closure of question time, residents are in attendance in an observational capacity only and will be asked to leave if a disturbance is caused.

Mr G Harris presented a question in relation to the minutes being approved when having already been ratified at full council. The chairman advised the minutes had been ratified, the committee were acknowledging them accordingly.

1.11 **Apologies for Absence**

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

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ms L Sharp

2.11 **Declaration of any personal or financial interests**

In accordance with the requirements of the process for dealing with member's standards matters, to disclose and declare all personal or financial interests including those of a partner/spouse on any Agenda item (as recorded in the Register of Member's Financial and Other Interests form).

Members present did not declare any personal or financial interests.

3.11 **Applications for Dispensations**

To consider and grant any applications from members who may have a personal/financial interest in a specific matter under consideration.

No applications were received prior to the meeting by members present.

4.11 **Minutes of the last Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 17 October 2020 having been circulated, were confirmed a correct record, and signed by the presiding Chairman.

5.11 **Clerks update**

The Clerk provided a verbal update in relation to the encroachment of land at the Hatch allotments.

6.11 **To deal with any items requiring URGENT attention**

Resolved: That authority be delegated to the Clerk for decisions required during the winter break, in accordance with the parish councils' scheme of delegation. Proposed by Cllr Ansell, seconded by Chris, resolved unanimously.

7.11 **Accounts**

- i) To consider requests for donations under section 137 of the Local

Government Act 1972 received

No applications were presented for consideration.

ii) To receive the AGAR following external audit for the year ended 31 March 2020

The Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending 31 March 2020 had been completed and returned by PKF Littlejohn, the external auditors appointed by the Audit Commission.

It was noted that there had been a genuine error in the publication of the AGAR document on the website due to a duplication in the posting of the Electors Rights documentation.

The website is to include a section referring to the Transparency Code.

Members present noted the interim audit report, thanking the Clerk/RFO for a successful audit visit. The council continues to operate an effective and robust system for conducting business. Points raised at the end of previous financial year had been addressed accordingly, and to the satisfaction of the internal auditor.

iii) To receive the budget comparison figures for the current financial year.

The budget comparison figures for the period 1 April to 1st November 2020 were presented and the figures noted. The current percentage expenditure of 66.2% was based on the current year's budget and excluded those figures that related to the previous year's commitment but had been paid in the current financial year.

iv) To receive an update regarding the refurbishment of the village hall

Members received an update regarding the refurbishment of the village hall. The public consultation period is scheduled to end on 30th November, and to date has been extremely positive. Tenders have been scrutinised with the preferred contractor identified. The works are scheduled to commence after Christmas for a 16-week period. The hall is planned to be operational from 1st April 2021.

v) To receive an update in relation to insurance policies held

Insurance policies are held in line with government guidelines, being reviewed annually in line with the asset register, and in conjunction with the parish council's internal auditor. A separate policy is held for the tractor mower due to more competitive pricing having been obtained.

8.11

Governance & compliance

i) Freedom of Information requests received

The council is at present dealing with 3 FOI's, two of which being very similar in nature and the third regarding the recording of the parish council meeting on the 5th November. Responses are being compiled accordingly.

ii) To consider the publication of FOI's received on the parish website

Resolved: To report on a quarterly basis to the committee the volume of emails and Freedom of Information Requests being received. An overview of the time and approximation of taxpayer's money spent in responding is to be included within the report.

iii) Formal Complaint received

In accordance with the complaints policy, the Chairman moved this item for consideration under item 12.10 of the agenda.

iv) To review the Habitual & Vexatious Complaints policy and consider its implementation

In accordance with the Habitual & Vexatious Complaints policy, the Chairman moved this item for consideration under item 12.10 of the agenda.

- iv) To review the solicitors report and give consideration to the criteria for Vexatious complaints and campaigns of harassment

Resolved: Further discussions are to be initiated with the solicitor upon the appropriate course of action having been determined.

9.11 Administration: Burial Ground

- i) To receive an update & consider any administrative issues in the daily operation of the burial ground

The Burial Ground Regulations, specifically regarding plastic cellophane surrounding flowers and its disposal, are to be reviewed for presentation at the next scheduled meeting.

10.11 Matters for Future Discussion – None

11.11 Items for Information Only

12.10 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To resolve, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of the following:

Resolved: To exclude the public and press accordingly. Proposed by Cllr Morrin, seconded by Cllr Ansell and resolved unanimously.

- i) Formal Complaint received

Members were advised a formal complaint had been received and was being reviewed. A formal response is being compiled.

- ii) To review the Habitual & Vexatious Complaints policy and consider its implementation

Resolved: To invoke the Habitual & Vexatious policy on three counts. The policy is to be followed accordingly, with the relevant sanctions being applied accordingly to each individual case.

13.10 Staffing

- i) To receive a report from the Staffing Committee pertaining to HR matters upon the council

Members noted the role of Village Hall Manager was now redundant. Thanks, were expressed to the Village Hall Manager for all their work and effort for their service upon the council.

Conclusion: The Chairman declared the meeting closed 19.39pm