

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

An Extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council was held virtually on Thursday 16th July 2020, commencing at 6.30pm.

Present: Mr T Ansell (Chairman), Mr I Macfarlane, Mr I Morrin
Mr G Harris, Ms L Sharp, Mrs J Ansell, Mrs A Hales,
Mr P Lawrence, Mr D Godwin, Ms A Gallagher, Mrs J Kellaway
Mr B Neilson, Mr D Kellaway, Mr N Morse
Mrs C Jackson-Doerge, Miss M Cresser, Dr R Longton

In Attendance: Clerk to the Parish Council & Assistant Clerk
10 Members of the Public

Apologies: Mr C Greaves

**Prior to the meeting officially opening Cllr I Macfarlane requested permission to read a statement.
(Appendix A)**

**Cllr T Ansell read a prepared statement to members in response
(Appendix B)**

The Chairman reiterated that a council meeting is not a public meeting; it is a meeting held in public and there is no requirement in law to provide an opportunity for the public to question the council, but the council welcomes the opportunity to offer it for a maximum period of 15 minutes:

Public Participation commenced at 18.52pm with the following questions being raised:

Q: A representative from Burghfield Football Club wished to understand how the pop-up pub would impact the start of the football season, beginning at the end of August with 2pm kick off's?

A: The Santa's would work with the football club and would try to accommodate or adjust their start times around the matches.

Q: A local resident expressed concerns regarding the Health & Safety of users of the park mixing with the clients of the pop-up pub, would it prevent normal users? Further concerns were expressed regarding possible increases of a local outbreak of Covid-19. How would the Santa's deal with anti-social behaviour and the impact of this on residents and park users?

A: Attendance is based on pre-booking and numbers will be specified. The Rec is large enough to not impact other parishioners using the recreation ground.

Anyone causing Anti-social behaviour will be asked to leave.

Q: A local business owner advised they had always supported the Santa events, however they have concerns as to the impact on sales during the pop-up pub sessions, especially if they are to become a 'regular' event?

A: The Santa's genuinely did not realise the impact on business and will aim to work with the business to ensure that the pop-up pub did not have an adverse effect but improve sales with children purchasing sweets.

Q: A local resident explained they had lived in Burghfield for 26 years and fully supported the Santa's and their events. However, they were concerned regarding the timing of the event, the fact that some residents are still isolating and any possible associated anti-social behaviour. They were also concerned of the impact on local businesses, especially the pubs who rely on busier weekend nights.

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Public Participation was closed at 19.07pm accordingly, and the proceedings of the meeting began:

Cllr G Harris requested permission to read a statement from a resident expressing concerns regarding the pop-up pub. The Chairman advised people are unable to vote by proxy. A parishioner can present their view regarding an item on the agenda if unable to attend the meeting via email prior to the meeting, which several parishioners decided to do. We cannot be selective over whose email we read out and whose we do not. Every councillor was provided with a copy of the emails received, both in support and objection, prior to the meeting.

1.07 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 member, Cllr C Greaves

2.07 Declaration of any personal or financial interests

The following members declared a personal interest in relation to the following items on the agenda for consideration: item 4.07 and 5.07

Cllr G Harris declared a personal interest in item 4.07, with the following members declaring a personal interest in item 5.07:

Mr T Ansell, Mrs J Ansell, Mr I Morrin, Mr D Godwin, Ms L Sharp, Mr N Morse, Mrs C Jackson-Doerge, Miss M Cresser, Dr R Longton, Mr I Macfarlane

3.07 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.

Cllr G Harris requested to read a further statement in relation to process and procedures undertaken in the calling of the Extraordinary meeting. The Chairman reiterated that the meeting had been called further to the Community Committee's request. Clarification was provided by the parish clerk that the Chairman may, on three clear days' notice, convene the council at any time.

(Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, paras 9(1), 10(2), 25(1) and 26(2))

Cllr D Kellaway & Cllr J Kellaway requested further clarification as to the inclusion of the agenda items. The parish clerk reiterated the meeting had been called further to the request for an Extraordinary meeting by the Community Committee.

Cllr G Harris requested the clerk minute that he had obtained a copy of the planning permission for the Sports pavilion, issued in 2004 where he believed it stated alcohol could not be served from the pavilion, due to planning conditions applied when issued. The Chairman advised that West Berkshire Council, the planning and licensing authority, had reviewed the conditions when originally granting the license. Cllr C Jackson-Doerge confirmed this.

Cllr G Harris, Cllr A Hales, Cllr D Kellaway and Cllr J Kellaway raised further points in relation to procedures for the discussion of the agenda items.

At 19.40pm, the chairman requested that members remembered why they were present and to proceed with the voting of the two agenda items presented.

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

4.07 To consider the request received from Cafe B to use the pavilion to sell take away for food a drink during July and August

Resolution: To grant permission for Café B to use the pavilion to sell take away food and drink during July & August.

Proposed by Cllr R Longton, seconded by Cllr Ian Macfarlane and **resolved** unanimously to grant permission.

(Cllr T Ansell did not vote)

5.07 To consider the request received from the Burghfield Santa's to sell drinks and snacks on Friday evening and Saturday afternoon and evening during July and August

Cllr D Kellaway presented a request for the vote to be split into two - an initial trial of one weekend, should it be successful, permission then is granted for the remainder of the period requested. The Chairman reiterated that members were voting on the agenda item as presented.

Resolution: To grant permission for the Burghfield Santa's to sell drinks and snacks on Friday evening and Saturday afternoon and evening during July and August.

Proposed by Cllr D Godwin, seconded by Cllr I Morrin and **resolved** by a majority vote to grant permission.

At the request of Cllr D Kellaway, members voting was recorded as follows:

In favour:

Mr I Macfarlane, Mr I Morrin, Ms L Sharp, Mrs J Ansell, Mr P Lawrence, Mr D Godwin, Ms A Gallagher, Mr B Neilson, Mr N Morse.

Against:

Mrs C Jackson-Doerge, Miss M Cresser, Dr R Longton, Mr D Kellaway, Mr G Harris
Mrs A Hales, Mrs J Kellaway

(Cllr T Ansell did not vote)

Close of meeting 20.00pm

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix A: Statement read by Cllr I Macfarlane

"I have had the pleasure and honour to serve on Burghfield Parish Council for about 12 years and until recently have enjoyed every minute. However, I now look around me and see discord, disunity, and disharmony.

Ever since the council has come under the overbearing scrutiny of one parishioner and their allies the focus has moved away from trying to serve the community to one of constantly watching their backs and spending time ensuring that every single nuance of legislation is followed to the letter of the law. We spend time arguing over procedure and picking holes in minor inaccuracies perceived to be important when what is important is being side lined or ignored.

The average parishioner is not interested in "points of procedural order", they want play areas provided, recreational areas kept clean and tidy and the Parish Council to serve them.

This meeting is a prime example. Instead of being able to discuss this matter in a robust but friendly manner we have councillors suggesting that people withdraw from the meeting as clearly their integrity is insufficient to allow them to make their own decisions regarding conflict of interest and we have councillors demanding that invitations be sent out to any potentially interested parties although that has never been done before.

We have interested parties whose views have a right to be heard but the tone of the emails airing these views is rude and aggressive, some demanding community consultation before this decision is taken. Democracy is electing representatives to make these decisions on behalf of the electorate.

Finally, we have a cowardly, unsigned document distributed by someone who seems to revel in sowing discord. This document is libellous as it suggests that I voiced support for the items under discussion tonight. During the meeting I studiously avoided making any comments regarding the issue under discussion as I felt that the Chairman of the meeting should not try to sway opinion by airing my personal views. The distributor of this letter clearly has an axe to grind with the Santa's as no mention was made of Café B's desire to use the pavilion, where people would congregate to consume food and drinks.

I know who the distributor of this unsigned document is, I have photographic evidence of them delivering to my neighbour although my property did not receive one. It is the same person who has sought to stifle the work of the parish council for several months by making spurious and vexatious demands on the clerk's time. It may seem strange, but the Parish Council manage to work perfectly well before this scrutiny started and will surely work well in the future, whether I want to waste my time remains to be seen.

We are all volunteers trying to our best in our own time but when we have to deal with pathetic anonymous individuals bent on causing trouble for their own twisted ends then I'm afraid I have to question my desire to carry on.

Thanks for listening, please let us try to maintain some dignity and cohesion when discussing this matter and whichever way the decision goes let us not let individuals divide us".

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix B: Statement & Public Address by Cllr T Ansell (Chairman)

"I need to correct the errors and libel within the letter that was sent to a select number of houses and forwarded to me by a "concerned parishioner". Since I live as close to the rec as any parishioner it is always disappointing these letters are never put through my door. This libellous letter has been forwarded to the Legal team at West Berks. Consequently, I will not discuss it any further other than to thank the members of the public who forwarded the picture of the person delivering the letters so that this could be followed up.

The Community Committee was held on the 9th of July not the 6th June as stated. The supposedly "select" members of the committee are all members of the parish council who were elected on to the parish council by the residents of the parish. They are on the committee because they volunteer to sit on that committee.

The Chairman of the Burghfield Santa's was not making a proposal to the committee he has was asking permission to use the pavilion. I have never stated whether I am for or against these events, but I do understand why people might assume I am.

With regards to the statement "reportedly a founder of the Burghfield Santa's" you will see it is clearly written on my profile on the Parish Website and always has been. It is also a fact registered in with West Berks council in members interest.

There was no video recording of the meeting, and the Chair of the meeting never expressed an opinion. I declined to not join in the discussions at the meeting, even though I am entitled to, to prevent accusations bias.

During the discussion, Cllr Andrea Hales proposed that any decisions should be taken by the full parish council. This was seconded by Cllr Daniel Kellaway, and the motion was carried.

As Chair of the council I was asked if I would agree to call an Extra-ordinary Council Meeting, I agreed and hence we are all here. There are no notices of this meeting on the notice boards because law was amended due to lock down and social distancing rules (the same reason we can hold meeting virtually now).

You should not expect the Chairman (or any other councillor) to declare a personal and prejudicial interest in this meeting. This implies a financial benefit to be clear and I will therefore be chairing this meeting.

Public Address:

Ok, now we can start the meeting.

Welcome everyone, it is always good to see so much interest in council meetings. Before I start the meeting officially, I would like to explain why this meeting is happening and what the process is.

Normally, permission for the use of the pavilion is decided by the Parish Clerk alongside a discussion with the Chair and Vice Chair. We all agreed that in current Covid related circumstances, when we knew there would be considerable public interest, this should be considered by the Community Committee and discussed in public. The rest you know.

The strange process we are about to follow is set in law and not an approach chosen by the Parish Council. At the beginning there will be 15 minutes for members of the public, including representatives of Café B and the Burghfield Santa's to make statements and comments. I would ask this does not cover normal council activity as this an extraordinary meeting. Following the 15 minutes the public will be required to remain silent and the council will vote on the 2 requests.

I see we have number of people on video so following any statements from Café B and Burghfield Santa's the clerk will call the names of people in turn (as they appear

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

on the her screen) to enable them to speak. Please be clear and concise as it is not as easy to hear you as it is when we are in the same room. Please keep your comments to the 2 items we are here to discuss:

- 1. Should café B be able to use the Pavilion to sell food and drink*
- 2. Should the Burghfield Santa be able to use the Pavilion to sell food and drink.*

The result of the vote does not guarantee the use of the Pavilion as normal legislation still applies. They will be required to provide the following documentation:

*Proof of Insurance cover
Risk assessment
Health and Safety Plan
Covid plan*

Until the Clerk of the council has accepted these as being to the required standard, as is always the case, no one will be able to use the Pavilion. The clerk also has the right to cancel future events if the agreed rules and processes are not followed'

Briefings were read by both Café B and the Burghfield Santa's in relation to their proposals presented, explain their proposals in detail to members.