

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

An Extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council was held virtually on Tuesday 24th March 2020, commencing at 7.00pm.

Present: Mr T Ansell (Chairman), Mr N Morse, Mr I Macfarlane, Mr G Harris, Mrs L Sharp, Mrs J Ansell, Mrs A Hales, Mr P Lawrence, Mr C Greaves, Mr D Godwin, Ms A Gallagher, Mr B Neilson, Mr D Kellaway, Mrs C Jackson-Doerge
In Attendance: Clerk to the Parish Council & Assistant Clerk
Apologies: Miss M Cresser, Dr R Longton
Absent: Mr I Morrin

1.03 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: Miss M Cresser, Dr R Longton

2.03 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.

3.03 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 Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 5 March 2020 be approved as a true and correct record by members present. Proposed by and seconded by and resolved unanimously

5.03 Clerks update

The Clerk provided a verbal update to members of the specific action taken to date following the recent outbreak of Covid-19.

- 1) All parish council and committee meetings have been cancelled until further notice
- 2) An Extraordinary parish council meeting was and held remotely via Zoom.
- 3) All staff have been instructed to work from home where possible, and those falling within the vulnerable category instructed to remain at home and self-isolate.
- 4) A "Good Neighbour" leaflet was circulated electronically within the parish, with individuals being encouraged to print and deliver to their immediate neighbours
- 5) The village hall is to remain open for use by the National Blood Service. All other bookings have been cancelled until further notice
- 6) The play areas within the parish have been closed until further notice

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7) Allotment holders have been reminded of the government guidelines and social distancing. However, the sites remain open until further guidance is issued via the Government and PHE.

6.03 Coronavirus Plan

Members present **resolved** unanimously the following procedure for the continued operation of Burghfield Parish Council. Proposed by Ms L Sharp, seconded by Mr N Morse.

In response to the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK and in the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting of the council in a reasonable time, the Clerk shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council where such decisions cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. This will be carried out where possible by consultation by electronic means of telephone. The clerk will consult with the Chairman for guidance as necessary. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its standing orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations. This delegated authority ceases upon the first meeting of the council after the council meeting at which the delegation was put in place.

ii) To discuss the postponement of future parish council meetings

The Chairman reiterated the recent government guidelines requesting everyone to remain on “lockdown” for the next three weeks. All parish council and committee meetings were to be cancelled until further notice in line with the guidance issued. **Resolved** unanimously.

iii) To determine the arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Council

Current legislation stipulates the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Council be held within specified dates. Members present determined that until legislation had been reviewed and finalised by government in relation to the measures being implemented amid the lockdown period, no further action could be taken.

Proposed by Mr G Harris, seconded by Mr I Macfarlane and **resolved** unanimously.

iv) To give consideration to the potential implications on the completion of the AGAR and signing of documentation within the specified legal framework

After the completion of the accounts and AGAR (Annual Governance & Accountability Return) at the close of the financial year (31st March) they must be certified by the Responsible Financial Officer of the authority, considered and approved by full council no later than the 29th June. This timeframe is set out in legislation and can therefore only be changed by the Government. The SAAA (Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments) has been liaising with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government and the current position is that they are not planning to make any changes to the deadlines. It has been suggested that government allow approval at a virtual meeting, however, a response is awaited. Upon guidance being issued, the parish council will ensure it is implemented to its best ability to ensure full legal compliance.

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7.03 To determine the delegation of powers for the review of planning applications received

Resolved unanimously by members present that the review of all planning applications be delegated to the Chairman of the Infrastructure Committee, the Vice-Chairman of the Infrastructure Committee and the Chairman of the Parish Council until further notice. Should the three members deem the application of significant importance, the application will be circulated to the whole committee for further review and comment.

Proposed by Ms L Sharp, seconded by Mr I Macfarlane and **resolved** unanimously.

8.03 To determine ways in which the provision of services to the elderly and vulnerable within the parish could be enhanced

A leaflet was circulated electronically to parishioners encouraging leaflets to be printed off and distributed to households within the immediate vicinity. Parishioners were also encouraged to ensure they were being neighbourly and offering help where needed.

Members present determined that there were a significant number of various volunteer groups within the parish that had set up to assist and help the elderly and vulnerable. The parish council would like to expressly thank all those who are giving their time and energy in assisting those in need.

Mr G Harris expressed that the allotments sub-committee had discussed their wish for the Ear Marked reserve for potential stand pipes at the allotment be released in case of need for the support of the parish during these exceptional times.

The chairman advised that correspondence was being held with both the Handybus and Burghfield & Mortimer Volunteer Bureau to ensure their valued services were able to continue operating during these times.

9.03 Items for information

The Clerk advised that as and when new guidance is issued, councillors will be notified accordingly.

Meeting closed at 19.50pm.