

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Parish Council was held at Burghfield Village Hall on Thursday 6th January 2022 commencing at 7.45pm.

Present: Mr T Ansell (Chairman), Mrs J Ansell, Mr P Lawrence, Miss M Cresser, Dr R Longton (arrived at 19.52), Mr D Godwin, Mr D Godding, Mr N Morse, Ms L Sharp, Mr I Morrin, Mr I Macfarlane, Mrs C Jackson-Doerge, Mr B Neilson, Mr C Greaves.
In Attendance: Clerk to the Parish Council, 0 Members of the public
Apologies: Ms A Gallagher

Public Participation:

In accordance with the Public Participation Policy, no written questions had been previously submitted to the Parish Clerk by 12 noon the day before the meeting. The Chairman closed the floor and proceeded with opening the meeting:

1.0122 To report, approve and record apologies for absence (and the reasons) from members of the Parish Council

Apologies for absence were presented and approved from members for Cllr A Gallagher.

2.0122 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

3.0122 Applications for Dispensations

Request for dispensations were not required or requested by members present.

4.0122 To receive a verbal report from the Chairman

The Chairman advised that following the resignation of Cllr S Awberry and the advertisement of the vacancy having been created, 10 electors submitted a written request to West Berkshire Council for a by-election to fill the vacancy. A notice of the by-election has been erected accordingly with a deadline date for nominations set for the 7th of January. It was noted that should there be more than 1 nomination, a by-election will be held, at an estimated cost of £6,800 to the parish.

5.0122 Questions to the chairman previously submitted in writing

The following question was previously submitted to the Chairman by Cllr C Greaves:

"I understand a considerable number of Freedom of Information requests have been received by the Parish Council during November and December 2021. Please could you provide a summary of the FOI requests, the approximate financial cost to the Parish Council and the approximate amount of the Clerk's time that has been taken up responding to the FOR requests. Is there anything that can be done to reduce this administrative burden of these requests on the Parish Council?"

Response:

During November & December the council has been in receipt of 11 requests for information, comprising 8 Freedom of Information requests and 3 enquiries for specific information.

The requests have comprised of the following:

- Information relating to Grants & Donations since 2016
- Display of Councillor Vacancy Notice's
- Information relating to the NDP and website
- Enquiry regarding the display of notices
- NDP Cookie policy
- Details relating to the refurbishment of Burghfield Village Hall
- Details relating to the operation and hire of Burghfield Sports Pavilion
- Details of all FOI's received by the council since 2016
- Details of CCTV owned by the parish council
- All external and internal Audit reports since 2016
- Details of Common Land and Village Greens owned by the parish council

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Significant time has been spent by the Clerk in preparing and answering the requests during the current financial year with 6 FOI's still outstanding. External advice is being sought in preparing the required responses in an attempt to reduce the administrative workload. A suitable format for publishing FOI's received is to be devised to enable full display on the parish website.

6.0122 To receive a report from a District Councillor

Cllr R Longton advised of the sad loss of John Farron, a former West Berks Councillor.

7.0122 Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 4 November 2021 be approved as a true and correct record.

8.0122 To receive the minutes of the meetings of the Infrastructure Committee and approve the recommendations therein

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Infrastructure Committee held on 4 November and 25 November 2021 be approved as a true and correct record.

9.0122 To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Community Hub Committee held on 2 December 2021 approve the recommendations therein

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Hub Committee held on 2 December 2021 be approved as a true and correct record.

10.0122 To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Community Committee held on 25 November 2021 approve the recommendations therein

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Committee held on 25 November 2021 be approved as a true and correct record

11.0122 To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Communications Committee held on 18 November 2021 approve the recommendations therein

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Communications Committee held on 18 November 2021 be approved as a true and correct record.

12.0122 To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Governance & Finance Committee held on 2 December 2021 approve the recommendations therein

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Governance & Finance committee held on 2 December 2021 be approved as a true and correct record.

13.0122 Financial Matters

- i) Parish Council Bank Account Reconciliation & accounts for payment as of 31 December 2021
The accounts reconciliation statements for month ending 31 December 2021 were noted. Items for payment were noted and as such sums are to be debited to the account of the Parish Council.
- ii) Village Hall Bank Account Reconciliation & accounts for payment as of 31 December 2021
The accounts reconciliation statements for month ending 31 October 2021 were noted. Items for payment were noted and as such sums are to be debited to the account of the Village Hall. During December there were a total of 48 bookings at the hall totalling £2,149.25. Bookings continue to remain strong for the first quarter of 2022 with most weekends being fully booked.
- iii) To approve the recommendations relating to the estimates for financial year commencing 1st April 2022

A detailed schedule, showing the income and expenditure for the last financial year, the current and protracted positions for the current year and the proposed income and expenditure for the year commencing 1st April 2022 were presented for consideration. In addition to the committed revenue finance, the capital schemes were submitted for approval. Resolved: that the figures shown in the estimates of income and expenditure for the year commencing 1st April 2022 be adopted. Proposed by Cllr I Macfarlane, seconded by Cllr J Ansell and resolved unanimously.

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- iv) To resolve the amount of precept to be served on West Berkshire District Council for the financial year commencing 1st April 2022
Consideration was given to the amount of precept to be served upon West Berkshire Council. In arriving at the required amount, members were reminded of the need to ensure that the general balances, aside from those earmarked for specific purposes, were maintained in compliance with current requirements. Members noted the amount presented no increase on last year's precept.
Resolved: that a precept for the sum of **£281,470**, be served upon West Berkshire Council for the year commencing 1 April 2022. Proposed by Cllr C Jackson-Doerge, seconded by Cllr N Morse and resolved unanimously.

14.0122 To confirm delegated authority in the event of the introduction of further Covid restrictions that would result in the parish council being unable to meet

Members present resolved unanimously the following procedure for the continued operation of Burghfield Parish Council. Proposed by Cllr L Sharp, seconded by Cllr B Neilson and resolved unanimously.

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 or 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.

15.0122 Matters for Future Discussion

Review of Standing Orders in relation to the length of office for any presiding Chairman.

16.0122 Items for information

Cllr J Ansell advise members of both her and Cllr A Gallagher's attendance at the open question session at both allotment's sites in December. The sessions proved successful and popular. Another session is scheduled for March 2022.

The Clerk advised the meeting schedule had been updated as follows for the month:

Community Hub	-	20 th January @ 6.30pm
Community Committee	-	20 th January @ 7.45pm
Communications Committee	-	27 th January @6.30pm
Infrastructure Committee	-	27 th January @ 7.45pm

17.0122 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. Exclusion was not required.

Close of meeting 20.41pm