

BURBAGE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 10TH NOVEMBER 2009.

PRESENT

Dr M. Hamer (Chairman), Mr J. Acheson, Mr K. Copp, Ms S Gray, Mr F. Jeffrey, Mr A Parmenter, Mr J Powell (Vice-Chairman), Mr N Venters, Mrs G Terry, Mr C Wheeler.

In Attendance: Councillor Mr S Wheeler, Wiltshire Council Member for Burbage & The Bedwys – and five members of the public.

1.0 APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Mr Brian Wheeler. The Chairman announced that he had received a letter of resignation from Councillor Mr. Mike Bird. Councillors expressed their thanks to Mr Bird for his valued contribution to the Council over many years.

2.0 PUBLIC FORUM

- 2.1 The Council was pleased to welcome Mrs Mary Treener, Area Manager (East), Wiltshire Council (WC) with responsibility for Waste, Recycling & Cleansing. She gave a most informative presentation on the current thinking within the WC and the movements towards harmonisation across the County towards waste collection and recycling. Having undertaken a comprehensive review of the varying policies on collection inherited from the Councils which had been brought together within the new Unitary Authority, a report, with associated recommendations, was due to be received by the Steering Committee at WC in December.
- 2.2 Following evaluation of the options, WC would be implementing agreed recommendations on refuse collection/recycling policies in the New Year. Mrs Treener responded positively to questions from both Councillors and those members of the public present and a lively discussion ensued. All present thanked Mrs Treener for her very professional, coherent and informative presentation and looked forward to receiving details of the new harmonised policy in the New Year.

3.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 12th OCTOBER 2009

- 3.1 The Minutes of the previous meeting were **agreed**.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 It was noted that the seat replacement in Suthmere Drive had arrived but had yet to be installed. Mr Simon Last had kindly agreed to carry out the installation but, responding to a question about an actual date or deadline for installation by Councillor Kevin Copp, who offered to contact Mr Last, Councillor Gill Terry felt it was not appropriate to, or necessary, to set a deadline for it being put in place. This view was supported by several other Councillors. For the last few weeks, the new seat has been kindly looked after by the Ex-Clerk to the Council.
- 4.2 At the previous meeting, concern had been expressed about malfunctioning street lights. The Vice- Chairman (Councillor John Powell) reported that he felt that there had been significant improvements in the maintenance of street lights - although the Council was both intrigued and interested to learn that some Councillors did not feel it was either their personal or functional responsibility to report inoperative street lights to the appropriate body (CLARENCE or Scottish & Southern Electricity). Members of the public present appeared surprised by this illuminating insight into the perceived attribution of responsibilities.
- 4.3 The Council was informed that Mr Mike Rowlands had been written to regarding the possibility of the development of a BMX track in the village. Responding to a question from a member of the public, the Vice-Chairman (Councillor John Powell) explained the provenance of the proposal and its location - should it be agreed by the Crown Estates. The notion had been triggered by a conversation between himself and some youngsters in the village some time ago. If it were to transpire, then it would be located at the rear of Croft Corner and between Seymour Pond. Some members felt it might strengthen the case for such a track if the wider views of other residents could be obtained.

5.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

- 5.1 Councillors were invited to express any personal or prejudicial interests relating to items on the Agenda. No such declarations were made.

6.0 PARISH COUNCIL VACANCIES

- 6.1 There were currently two (2) vacancies for Councillors following resignations. It was agreed that, in accordance with Statutory Regulations, these would be communicated to WC in order that they could provide the Council with the necessary legal notices to display – inviting interested members of the public to register their interest. A fourteen (14) day period would then be set in motion whereby any aspirant Councillors could register their interest. Should ten (10) Registered Electors in the Parish request, the Council would be obliged to hold a ballot. In the absence of receiving such a formal request, it would be for the Parish Council to decide who it should co-opt as additional members – subject to not exceeding its legal quota of thirteen (13) Councillors.

- 6.2 Three members of the public present at the meeting expressed their interest in exploring the possibility of becoming Parish Councillors. With the agreement of the meeting, the Chairman invited them to make a short presentation as to the reasons why they might wish to be considered as Councillors. Mr Colin Brown & Mrs Phoebe Foy-Phillips gave short introductions on their background and reasons for seeking to join the Parish Council. Mr Gavin Ketchen indicated that he, also, had an interest in becoming a Councillor but declined to make a statement at this time.

7.0 CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

- 7.1 The Council noted the resignation of the Clerk and wished to formally record its thanks, gratitude and appreciation for all his many contributions over the last few years. Councillor Frank Jeffrey had received a copy of the Clerk's resignation letter and quoted from it, commenting that a private email sent from Councillor Kevin Copp to the Clerk appeared to be one of the factors which had triggered his decision to stand down. Councillor Kevin Copp explained that his email had requested that the Minutes of Council meetings should be corrected and validated before distribution, in terms of both their factual accuracy - and for any typographical errors.
- 7.2 The meeting was reminded that the Minutes are an official record of the deliberations and decisions of the Council and, in addition, were a formal legal document. Councillor Gill Terry disagreed and felt that the Parish Council did not need to operate in this way as she had been very happy with things being done in an informal way. Councillor Chris Wheeler and several other Councillors agreed with this view, pointing out that the Council had operated in this manner for many years. Councillor Kevin Copp asked that his dismay at this response **should be recorded** in the Minutes.
- 7.3 All members of the Council had received draft copies of the following documents circulated, ten (10) days before the meeting, on the 31st October 2009:-
- 7.3.1 Draft Job Description
 - 7.3.2 Draft Contract of Employment
 - 7.3.3 Draft Advertisement for the Vacancy
- 7.4 The Chairman thanked Councillor John Acheson for his comments that had been received. This was a positive and constructive suggestion to alter the proposed remuneration to a monthly sum and to change the salary payment date to the 2nd Monday in each month in order that it coincide with the Parish Council's scheduled meetings. No other comments had been received.
- 7.5 There then followed an illuminating discussion on what was expected of the role of Clerk and the characteristics and attributes that would be anticipated in order to ensure that the Council conducted its business

within the Law, complied with best practice and that members received informed advice on options available to them when deciding on Policy or Financial issues. Some Councillors were surprised, concerned and alarmed to learn that, at least, one Councillor felt that they were indifferent to this position and that they did not see it as a problem if the Parish Council did not comply with the Law and its Statutory Obligations.

- 7.6 After raising seven (7) “Points of Order” (all of which were addressed) during an animated discussion, Councillor Susan Gray agreed to circulate, well in advance of the next meeting, an alternative suggested draft Contract of Employment and Job Description. It was **agreed** that the Council would seek to secure agreement on these at its next meeting so that it could then proceed with formally advertising the post.

8.0 PEWSEY AREA COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP/AREA BOARDS

- 8.1 Councillor Susan Gray, the representative on the Community Partnership, reported that there had been no meeting. A meeting of the Community Partnership was scheduled for the coming Thursday but she was unable to attend. Inviting other members of the Council to act as a substitute, no offers were received.
- 8.2 The Chairman updated the Council on the meeting (Held the previous evening) of the Pewsey Area Board. The key speaker had been WC Councillor Toby Sturgis – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Waste. He had reinforced the comments made earlier in the meeting by Mrs Treener and explained that recommendations for a coherent and harmonised County policy on Waste Collection/Recycling would be received in December with a decision being taken early in the New Year. He had indicated that the resolution of the plastics/cardboard recycling issue would not be resolved by the wide scale deployment of skips in local communities.
- 8.3 To note: - Burbage Village Hall had been successful in securing a grant of £1,000 from the Area Board to facilitate upgrading of its kitchen facilities. Pewsey Vale School had secured the support of the Area Board in its bid for £25,000 to assist in enhancing its refectory. This bid was seeking to access part of a sum of £2,800,000 which had been made available to WC under the Government’s Performance Reward Scheme. It was open to any public organisation (Including Parish Councils) to submit proposals for consideration under this scheme.
- 8.4 The Area Board had invited interested Parish Councils to seek support in operating a Community Speed Watch programme. A majority of Councillors did not feel this to be a priority issue for the village. At its meeting in September 2009, the Parish Council had agreed to purchase one hundred and fifty (150) 30 mph stickers for voluntary attachment to “Wheelie Bins” in appropriate locations on the High Street and Ailesbury Way.

These were now available and WC Councillor Stuart Wheeler kindly agreed to collect them at the next meeting of the Community Partnership.

9.0. RECREATION GROUND

9.1 The Recreation Ground Committee had not yet met. Councillors John Powell, Gill Terry, Tony Parmenter and John Acheson **agreed** to meet in order to prioritise the work that needed to be undertaken – and report back with their recommendations to the Council at its next meeting.

10.0 PLANNING

10.1 Following a formal Planning Appeal, the Inspector has refused permission for the following application:-

E/09/0698/FUL 3 Ailesbury Way

10.2 Wiltshire Council had approved the following applications:-

E/09/1133/FUL
E/09/1266/TCA
E/09/1183/TCA

10.3 Those Councillors who had availed themselves of the opportunity to view the following Planning Applications raised no objection to them. It was thus **agreed** that the Parish Council had no objection to the following Planning Applications:-

E/09/1412/LBC	103 High Street –	Rear and Side Extensions.
E/09/1358/FUL	Westcourt Stables –	Dutch Barn
E/09/1401/LBC	22 Steeles Cottage –	Two (2) storey Extension
E/09/1281/TCA	9 Marlborough Road –	Tree reduction

10.4 The Chairman reminded Councillors that there was an open exhibition at the Bouverie Hall in Pewsey on Monday 23rd November 2009 which outlined the key proposals in WC's plan for future housing and building developments in Wiltshire. He encouraged all available to attend as this would be one of a limited number of opportunities to make a formal response to WC's Spatial Strategy proposals. This would guide and inform developments within the County over the next 15 years – and lay down a framework for all future Planning proposals.

11.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

11.1 The following Cheque(s) were **approved** for payment: -

900265	School Directional Signage	£328.37
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11.2 The Responsible Financial Officer (Councillor John Acheson) distributed an update on the Council's financial position - but did not speak to his paper. This will be an Agenda item at the next meeting.

12.0 CORRESPONDENCE.

12.1 A number of general items of correspondence had been received and these were made available to Councillors who wished to view them. Specifically, an invitation had been received from BT who wished to ascertain if the Council would be interested in "adopting" the telephone boxes in the village for a cost of £1 each. This proposal found no support.

12.2 A letter had been received from the Solicitors acting for the Council in relation to a perceived outstanding sum from Seaward Properties. Five letters had been sent over the last year but, to date, no replies had been received.

12.3 A letter had been received from WC reminding the Parish Council that it would need to receive information by the 14th of January 2010 on the level of Precept that the Council wished to set for the forthcoming year. It was **agreed** to hold a meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee on Tuesday, 1st December at 7.00pm in order that the current and projected position of the Council could be reviewed - and recommendations made to the full Council meeting in December as to the level of the Precept that should be set for the New Year. (Provisional venue, 20 Marlborough Road, Burbage SN8 3AU).

13.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 Councillor Powell reported that he had invited a selected number of people to assist with planting daffodil bulbs on the by-pass verge the following morning.

13.2 The Council was concerned to learn that there had recently been a burglary at 1 Ailesbury Way.

13.3 Relating to previous discussions, a tree specialist was to give advice on the condition of the Yew trees at Manor Farm. The Council was pleased to learn that the owners were willing to present their findings at a future Parish Council meeting.

13.4 As some Councillors needed to leave the meeting, a number of items were **agreed** to be carried forward to the next meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.25 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting will be held on **MONDAY, 14th December 2009**, 7.30 pm at the Church Hall.