

*Minutes of an ordinary meeting of Burghclere Parish Council held on
6th April 2020 at 7.30pm and in accordance with current guidance this was held virtually
via “Zoom”*

Present: Cllrs R Carrow (Chair), A Crowley (Vice Chair), B Canning, S Whiting,
G Morton, I Collins

J Letsome (Clerk), Borough Cllr Izett (from item 7 to item 12), C Saint

1. Apologies

Received and accepted from Cllrs Wason and Richardson.

2. Declaration of members’ interests for this meeting

There were none declared.

3. Confirm the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 2nd March 2020

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 2nd March 2020 had been circulated to all prior to the meeting, Cllr Whiting proposed they be accepted as a correct record, this was seconded by Cllr Morton and approved by all.

4. Confirm the minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting held on 19th March 2020

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 19th March 2020 had been circulated to all prior to the meeting, Cllr Whiting proposed they be accepted as a correct record, this was seconded by Cllr Crowley and approved by all.

5. County Councillor Report

There was no report as County Councillor Thacker was not present.

6. Borough Councillor’s Report

Borough Cllr Izett spoke to his previously circulated report which is attached as Appendix 1, he invited Cllrs feedback on how well current measures in place to deal with the Coronavirus emergency were operating. It was agreed to cover this in agenda item 9.

7. Parishioners’ Open Time

Parishioners had been invited to submit comments to the meeting via email or telephone to the Clerk, however none had been received.

8. Chairman’s comments

Cllr Carrow reported that:

Harts Hollow

Following several discussions and an unhelpful response from Thames Water on 9 March, he had reported Thames Water to the Environment Agency on 10 March (Case reference 1789609). The EA’s enquiry phone line had been closed due to coronavirus so an update is not available at present.

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He had circulated a full report to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, together with a detailed email trail. However, since sharing the report he had received further contact and was expecting a telephone call on 14th April, following which he would provide Cllrs with a further update.

Emergency Planning

Cllr Carrow had previously circulated the report attached at Appendix 2, together with a ‘straw man’ paper for consideration. He thanked Cllr Richardson for his insight and input. He reported that he had subsequently amended the plan to include reference to the defibrillators. He invited Cllrs to submit comments prior to the next meeting, at which time it would be presented for approval. He proposed that the plan would then be included on the list for annual review.

Action: Cllr Carrow to circulate final plan prior to May meeting

9. Coronavirus Update

Cllr Carrow gave an overview on the work he had been undertaking as lead of the local Information Exchange Hub. He invited Cllrs to consider:

- If the approach was working?
- Does more need to be done?
- If so, what could be done?

There was a discussion during which it was recognised that the activities already taking place by existing volunteer groups were meeting many of the immediate needs, especially when combined with the goodwill of neighbours and friends. However, concerns were expressed that there may still be some vulnerable parishioners who were harder to reach. It was agreed that further consideration would be given to undertaking a “leaflet drop”, whilst being mindful of available resources at the same time.

It was agreed that more detail was required with regards to the potential role that the Portal Hall might play as a community hub.

Action: Cllr Carrow to draft leaflet

10. S106 Contributions

The Clerk had circulated the recently received Parish Statements prior to the meeting. Cllr Carrow reminded Cllrs about previous discussions that had taken place with regards to a quote to improve the playground, and how S106 monies may be used to meet the cost. It was noted that historically there had been a lot of investment in the play area and it was felt to be generally complete, with the exception of relocating the swing. During discussion it was agreed that there were other priority areas to consider and therefore it would be useful to know what legal restrictions there were, if any, to reallocate the funds to another purpose.

Actions: Cllr Carrow to circulate playground quote
Clerk to establish extent of legal restrictions

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- 11. Planning applications received since 2nd March 2020**
20/00500/HSE Heatherlea Broken Way, Adbury Holt, RG20 9BN
Erection of single storey side/rear extension. Change of external materials and changes to fenestration of existing dwelling.

Details of the application were circulated prior to and during the meeting.

On discussion it was agreed there were no objections.

Action: Clerk to submit decision to B&DBC planning.

- 12. Neighbourhood Plan Update**
Cllr Carrow spoke to a previously circulated report attached at Appendix 3. Following a number of subsequent discussions the situation had changed in respect of the Independent Examiner's report. and consequently he proposed that the Parish Council should accept all the Independent Examiner's recommendations, subject to resolution with B&DBC about Policy B8. and that the PC should agree in principle to an extension to the 56-day statutory period for carrying out the referendum in light of the government's response to Covid-19 if asked. This was agreed by all Cllrs. Cllr Carrow also noted that work to clarify and represent what weight the referendum version of the NP would carry was still under consideration.

- 13. Documents for review and agreement**
The Clerk had previously circulated the following documents that were due for review,

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations

She explained that these had been based on model documents and information provided by NALC and HALC.

All Cllrs agreed these documents should be approved and adopted.

- 14. Lengthsman update**
On discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would complete the work schedule for April, requesting grass cutting.

Action: Clerk to submit work schedule.

- 15. Website/IT Progress Report**
Cllr Crowley reported that he was continuing to make progress and was looking at the Parish website in conjunction with the one for the Portal Hall. He was gaining a better understanding of the domain names and ownership. He was also looking at methods of being able to share documents more effectively as an alternative to email.

- 16. Footpaths report**
Cllr Carrow spoke to the report attached as Appendix 4. There being no further questions or comments, Cllr Morton proposed the report be accepted, this was seconded by Cllr Canning and agreed by all.

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17. LitterWarden

The Clerk had previously advised Cllrs that the Litterwarden's salary was due for review in light of the increase to the minimum wage to £8.72 per hour. It was agreed that the Litterwarden's annual salary be increased £5441.28 with effect from 1st April 2020.

Action: Clerk to advise Litterwarden and arrange for any necessary adjustment to Standing Order arrangements.

18. Appointment of Cllr Amanda Wason as representative on Earlstone Common Trust

Cllr Carrow offered his apologies for having to withdraw as a representative due to other commitments. However, it was noted that Cllr Wason had expressed an interest and willingness in becoming one of the three PC representatives on the Trust.

Cllr Canning proposed she be appointed, this was seconded by Cllr Whiting and agreed by all.

19. Accounts

The Clerk had previously circulated the following payments for approval:

Budget Section	Date	Details	Cheque	Amount
Expenditure				
Salary/PAYE	02/04/2020	F Knott - Litterwarden	SO	£390.00
Salary/PAYE	02/04/2020	J Letsome - Salary		£463.40
Courses/Admin	02/04/2020	J Letsome - Expenses		£70.68
other payments	27/03/2020	Oneill Homer		£3,300.00
Other payments	19/03/2020	Greentips	2578	£720.00
Salary/PAYE	02/04/2020	F Knott & J Letsome - PAYE		£166.80

It was noted that the payments to HMRC, J Letsome and Oneill Homer had been processed online as BACS payments by Cllr Carrow in order to overcome the current difficulties that arranging cheque payments presented.

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The Clerk had previously circulated a bank reconciliation completed to 13th March 2020 showing:

- A balance in the Treasurers account of £ £7005.66
- The balance in the Business Bank Instant Account stood at £6,802.11.

20. Clerk's Report

The Clerk had previously circulated a report attached as Appendix 5.

21. Future Meetings

It was noted that government legislation had recently been passed to allow for some flexibility to the frequency of meetings, and the method by which they were held, including the ability to hold them virtually. This legislation also removed the requirement to hold an Annual Assembly in May.

At the time of meeting, it was understood that it was not possible to hold the AGM virtually, however that advice has since been updated and should the next Parish Council meeting be held virtually, it can remain the AGM.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.13pm.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 4th May 2020.

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Appendix 1 – Borough Councillor’s Report

A) Coronavirus Emergency

Parish councillors are receiving regular updates from the borough on the direct and indirect co-ordination/ signposting roles it is carrying out. The parish council itself is to be commended on how well it has mobilised and is playing its part along with other voluntary groups in communicating so as to ensure that those in the community who need help receive it.

The borough is working with Basingstoke Voluntary Assoc to co-ordinate with local community groups including delivery of food and medicines. It would help me to understand how well or otherwise this is functioning at the Burghclere level. Portal Hall is one of the designated community hubs.

HCC, British Red Cross and Public Health England have been tasked by govt to meet the needs of high needs individuals. The borough along with the voluntary sector is providing on the ground capacity and supporting local groups on food distribution.. The local charity, Spotlight is distributing food and receiving it. Tesco and Asda have been providing food parcels.

The borough is seeking to get funds provided by govt out to businesses as quickly as possible including grants and business rates relief for small businesses from 8th April. On council tax, all customers paying by instalment will be automatically moved to paying by 10 month instalments starting from June. All customers paying by instalment will have their no payment months in April and May 2020 - this is instead of February and March 2021. Working age residents supported through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme will receive up to an additional £150 reduction to their bill.

Grounds maintenance staff will start cutting from today to ensure sight lines are clear at road junctions. Garden waste and recycling collection has been suspended. There are pressures on weekly bin collections not least because of staff sickness and the need for social distancing. Things are being kept under review. Across the council, 362 staff are working from home and 94 remain on site.

The borough is part of the leadership of the Local resilience Forum for Hants and Isle of Wight area. This grouping of key organisations puts in place emergency plans including, in the case of this emergency, additional critical care bed and mortuary capacity. We are advised that the likely peak for critical care beds will be the 3 weeks from 13th April.

Parish cllrs feedback on how well or otherwise current measures in place to deal with the emergency are operating and any questions you may have would be useful.

As with other organisations and companies, the crisis will have a major impact on council finances. We are waiting for an early assessment.

B) Harts Lane- Falcon Development's PIP

The planning inspector's decision represents a significant victory for our community. It has been a very good team effort including a big well done to the chairman and your planning advisers. The outcome was far from certain and the grounds on which the PIP was refused are interesting for what the inspector regarded as important and what he didn't. The 35 house appeal from Falcon is still with the Inspectorate.

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C) Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

The decision that the draft NP has been approved with modifications by the Independent Examiner and can now proceed to a referendum represents a significant milestone assuming it is approved by the parish council. A tremendous amount of carefully considered work by those involved has been done to reach this point and this is recognised by the Independent Examiner's comment that "The Burghclere Parish Neighbourhood Plan has a clear Vision for the Parish, which is supported by well - defined objectives".

D) Other Council Business

Public meetings have had to be cancelled including the Manydown (3500 homes) Planning Committee meeting. Govt has now authorised regulations for holding of "virtual" public meetings by councils (including parish councils) before May 7th. The regulations say members can attend remotely and must be able to hear others and be heard. However, video links are only required where practicable.

Appendix 2 -Emergency Planning report for the Parish Council

Parish Councils do not have a formal role in emergency planning, although different local authorities take different approaches. Notwithstanding lack of guidance it is prudent to assess what risks we might face and consider what steps might be taken to deal with a range of problems that might be encountered.

The paper sets these out. It notes who might be called upon, what command and control arrangements could be put in place and what human and physical resources could be called upon.

It specifically does not attempt to address every specific contingency nor does it provide a fixed response template. Instead it offers a series of planning steps that anyone who finds themselves in charge or involved can use to shape the local response to the circumstances in support of the emergency services or local government.

Although it broadly follows military and civilian contingency planning practices it uses simple terms that can be easily followed. Nor does it need to be followed slavishly. It is a flexible guide, adaptable to a range of circumstances.

It also contains a contact list of those in the local community who could be called upon to assist. This is far from exhaustive and in a crisis the emergency planning team will need to identify what support is required and from where.

Given our proximity to Newbury, it is proposed to send a copy, once complete, to West Berks Council in addition to B&DBC and HCC.

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Appendix 3 -NP SG report for the Parish Council-6 Apr

The Independent Examiner (IE) concluded her work on 23 March and has issued her report. B&DBC are drafting the Portfolio Holder's Report and will get the IE's report published. Before agreeing to proceed to referendum the Borough Council seeks the Qualifying Body's confirmation that it is content with the IE's final report. While disappointed that our representations were not incorporated, it is recommended that the Parish Council agree, and that the plan should proceed to referendum on the basis that the IE's recommendations will be applied.

B&DBC have noted that the 56-day statutory period for carrying out the referendum will need to be extended in light of the government's response to Covid-19. It is proposed that the Parish Council agree in principle to an extension, informed by further government advice as necessary, should the Borough Council request it.

The referendum version of the neighbourhood plan (NP) can now be amended according to the IE's recommendations. Some issues, such as redrafting maps, will need to be done with B&DBC support, which is complicated by lack of access to the relevant IT systems. Officers are currently looking at how this can be best managed. The majority of changes however can be carried out in-house and this work has already begun.

We are looking at what clarification might be required regarding the weight that will now be attached to the referendum version of the neighbourhood plan. This is relevant and important in relation both to Falcon Developments' appeals and to future planning applications in the parish. We will look at this together with B&DBC; one option for the Parish Council being to write to the MHCLG direct to seek clarification and guidance.

Appendix 4 - Footpaths report

Clearance of footpath 040/503/4 was finally completed on 11th March thanks to the tremendous help of Kevin Bailey, Miggie Bruce, Geoff Morton and Sandra Whiting. Quick progress was maintained in large part due to Miggie's rock cakes; first the anticipation then the sustenance!

No further action has been carried out on the footpath network due to Covid-19 restrictions but it is pleasing to note that many people are taking advantage of the dry weather to exercise.

The plan for the installation of the new metal gate at Hockley's Hole remains on hold for the next few months.

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Appendix 5 - Clerk's Report

Parishioners' Comments

The meeting agenda was placed on the website and each of the noticeboards and explained that it was to be a remote meeting in line with current guidance. Parishioners were invited to submit comments to the Clerk via phone or email, which were to reach me by 12 noon on the day of the meeting – none have been received.

The situation is now clearer with the running of virtual meetings, therefore in future it would be possible to email the zoom link to any parishioner wanting to attend prior to the meeting.

Documents for Review

I have circulated the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for review with a view to agreeing them at today's meeting. However with regards to the Risk Assessment and Asset Register documents – I haven't yet been able to complete updated versions of either of those, so will push those forward to the next meeting. The Risk Assessment that was in place dates back to April 2016, and will require quite a few changes – unfortunately HALC don't provide a template as with the other documents, but do provide recommendations on what it should include. So I can use that as a base – and also take a look at what other PC's do. It is more to cover risks regarding finances and procedures, but it can also reference the emergency planning document – and as we're in the midst of the Coronavirus crisis, it would seem appropriate to take the opportunity to ensure it covers risks such as that! So, with all that in mind I'd prefer not to rush it – and will prepare and circulate drafts for comment before the next meeting.

Audit

I've been in touch today with the internal auditor to see if there are any planned changes to the audit she's planning to undertake on 12th May – because that would involve a visit to my home. She says at this stage she's still planning on going ahead on that day and via visits, as long as the 2 metre rule distance rule can apply. But if necessary, she's happy to do it remotely via the collection and dropping off of files.

With regards to the external audit, it is expected that there will be an update soon from PKF Littlejohn, who will soon be sending the AGAR forms, but the statutory guidance remains the same (unless advised otherwise) - that they should approved by full council by no later than 29 June, published before 1 July to comply with the public rights period and certificate published by 30 September.

Chairman _____ Date _____