

BURSTOW PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Meeting of Burstow Parish Council held** on Tuesday 12th November 2019 at 7.00pm in the Centenary Hall, Smallfield

OPEN FORUM: No residents of the parish attended

Attendance: Chairman Ian Wates Vice Chair Bob Locke, Cllr Ray Holdsworth, Eddie Lord, Trevor Brock, Andrew Gilbert, Ashleigh Bolton, Fern Warwick-Ching, John Carney and Debbie Hale

Dist Cllr Harry Fitzgerald, Clerk to Council

Dist Cllr Kevin Bourne

064 Apologies received from County Cllr Steeds

065 None

066 None required

067 The minutes of Tuesday 10th September 2019 were signed as a true record of the meeting

068 Cllr Gilbert proposed that Mrs Linda Herwig be co-opted to the Parish Council, seconded by Cllr Wates and carried unanimously. Mrs Herwig signed her declaration of acceptance of office and completed the interests form.

068 Chairman's Announcements –

Standing Orders suspended

069 Report from Dist Cllr Byrne regarding exit of Chief Exec and other matters
Cllr Byrne stated that Tandridge District Council is in financial and organisational disarray and that, in his opinion, this results from a 'Customer First' program instituted by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) as a cost cutting exercise which has totally failed. The SLT did not have the skills to implement such a program and that the governance and scrutiny failed to recognise this. Many staff lost their jobs during this program and the remaining staff are very unhappy. Financial problems have become obvious with closer examination and it is predicted there will be an overspend in this year along of between £1.1 and £1.7 million. This is likely to continue for a number of years resulting in a total overspend of £3 to £4 million. This overspend is mostly attributed to salaries paid out to agency staff brought in to replace existing staff who were made redundant through 'Customer First'. A new SLT is being brought in and Councillors have formed an Improvement Group, co-chaired by Cllr Byrne. This group will implement a financial recovery plan, encourage cross party working to ensure proper oversight is put in place, review, and where appropriate, cancel grandiose plans, attempt to rebuild staff morale, carry out a thorough review of existing governance and, where required, change it. Cllr Herwig asked if people will be held accountable for this deficit. Cllr Byrne replied that they have left the Council employ voluntarily. Cllr Byrne said that

Louise Round, former Chief Exc, and Piers Mason, Head of Place, have both left the Council. Jayne Godden-Millar, Head of People was still in post. The interim Chief Exc is a temporary appointment of a member of staff who has been at Tandridge for about 9 months. The Council are not planning to appoint a new Chief Exc in the near future.

Cllr Lord asked how many planning officers should TDC have and how many do they actually employ. Cllr Byrne replied that under Customer First, numbers were reduced from 27 to 13, of the 13 he doesn't know how many are permanent or agency staff.

Cllr Byrne also reported that there have been numerous problems with the new planning software program without testing it beforehand and hence there are many glitches/problems with it. Council tax will be increased by the maximum permitted next year.

070 Update by Tandridge District Councillors

Dist Cllr FitzGerald reported that the nominated planning officer handling the Dowlands application has left the Council and it has not been assigned to a new officer as yet. Cllr Locke expressed concern that, with the constant staff changes, the application may get consent by default. Cllr FitzGerald reassured Council that he has requested the application go to Committee. Cllr FitzGerald also reported he has received complaints from neighbours about the lights at Flightpath Garage and he is in correspondence with them.

071 SpeedWatch update – Cllr Bolton reported there have been a couple of incidents concerning volunteers. One man, upon receiving a police letter, went on to social media and suggested that one day someone would mount the kerb and mow down volunteers. Police visited the man and cautioned him. Most recently, last Friday, a car travelling on Chapel Road did swerve across the road and mount the pavement, as if the driver was aiming to hit the volunteers. The SpeedWatch volunteers had to jump to one side. The Police are following this up.

Cllr Bolton stated that it appears as if the SpeedWatch presence is reducing the number of speeding vehicles in the Parish, for example in October 2018, 394 speeding offences were recorded over 14 sessions, an average of 28 per session, and for October 2019, 228 offences were recorded over 17 sessions, an average of 13 per session. The Speed Watch group do not keep a tally of total passing vehicles per session so it is not possible to calculate the percentage of offences per session.

072 Neighbourhood Watch update – Cllr Hale informed Council that there have been fifty reports of damage to vehicles in the area, including some tyre slashing. The police have been operating the helicopter in the area and arrests have been made. As a result of this a number of dismantled air rifles and catapults have been found. A report of gun fire in the parish was investigated by police and CCTV footage from the Council's system has been taken in evidence. Shed and vehicle thefts in the area are ongoing. Cllr Lord reported that Sussex police mentioned ball bearing attacks and that a vehicle and weapons were found. However, no charges have been brought as there is insufficient evidence to support a prosecution.

073 Neighbourhood Plan update – No update at present though a meeting was held last week.

074 Correspondence

- The Clerk has been in communication with the Auora School on Redehall Road, due to complaints about inconsiderate parking.
- A resident has written to the Chairman voicing various complaints such as HGV traffic, pollution from waiting vehicles. The Chairman has responded.

075 COMMITTEE MEETINGG– to accept the minutes of meetings since 10th September 2019

a) Planning Committee –10 & 24/9 & 8/10 2019

b) Finance & General Purpose – 8/10 2019

c) Properties & Projects – 24/9 2019

Unanimously received by Council

076 To accept the Insurance review carried out by Cllrs Gilbert and Bolton – Clerk to circulate electronically

Standing Orders suspended as a resident arrived late to the meeting and felt it to be imperative he speak. Mr Warner, the resident, stated that culvert running alongside the M23, adjacent to Hathersham close, had once again been filled in and poses a flooding risk. Highways England had given him no real reason as to why this was done, nor did they say when the culvert would be reinstated, or even if this would happen at all. Mr Warner has also been making enquiries as to how the new gantry locations had been selected. Kiers representatives have advised that he approach Highway England for this information,

077 To discuss and consider providing affordable housing using a specific provider. Councillors discussed the best way forward and whether it would be suitable to seek bids from a number of housing providers. The Clerk advised that land value agreements are decided by the District Valuer rather than an open market bidding system. Cllr Gilbert proposed the Clerk contact the DV, seconded by Cllr Hale and carried unanimously.

078 Christmas fair update - Council agreed a working party meeting would take place on Friday at 10.30am in the Council office

079 Update on Café

The Clerk reported the meeting with TDC went well and that they were very interested in offering Sure Start services locally. An annual rent of £1 would be offered on the proviso that health services remained free at point of service. It was also agreed that any 'pay for' services offered by TDC would split the room rental income 50/50 between TDC and BPC in order to support free services.

Food Truck – a new food truck started operating at the Hall. However, TDC have informed the truck that there is only a single licence offered and that is to the fish and chip van on a Wednesday and therefore they were prohibited from working at the Hall.

Friday hot food café – the Clerk has secured a food company, Apple & Cor, that, from Friday 17th January 2020, will offer freshly prepared food between 8.30am and 4.00pm. The hours can be increased if the demand is there. The company are also interested in offering a regular weekly evening event.

Craft Shop – The Council have been approached with a view to offering a 'pop up' craft shop from the meeting room where residents can purchase craft materials. Council will make a budget provision of £500 to purchase a suitable cabinet for the meeting room where the items can be stored securely. Mrs Angela Schwarz will run the 'pop up'.

080 Pollution monitoring at Plough Road junction and next to Redehall Playing Field – Council requested the Clerk obtain costs and then this could be decided by the F&GP Committee. The Clerk was also directed to share the traffic survey, carried out by the parish council as part of the car park application, with the Neighbourhood Plan group to assist with their work. It was felt this may also be beneficial in reducing the number of future HGV licences issued by the Traffic Commissioner for the area.

- 081 Budget preparation – the Clerk was asked to electronically circulate the previous year’s budget figures to Councillors. Council resolved to maintain the individual dwelling’s precept charge to the same as last year.
- 082 Finance
- i) To receive and accept the external auditor report from Littlejohns , previously circulated – Council accepted the report and noted the recommendation that annual safety checks be carried out in the same financial year as the audit
 - ii) Audit trail report from Cllrs Carney and Lord – unanimously accepted by Council, no issues to report.
 - iii) To discuss and consider the Parish Council having a card reader to accept payments. – Cllr Wates proposed, seconded b Cllr Lord and carried unanimously that the Clerk purchase a ‘Square’ card reader system for use by the Council
 - iv)To receive Schedule of Payments to be ratified and authorised, list as laid before all Councillors - unanimously accepted by Council
- 083 The Clerk was asked to commence a review of hall hire charges and report to Council

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15pm. The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday 14th January 2020 at 7.00pm

Signed..... **Dated**.....