

# BURSTALL PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024, 7.35pm at Burstall Village Hall

Present: Cllr B Gasper (Chair), Cllr A Kerrison (Vice- Chair), Cllr S Godfrey, Cllr S Main, Cllr K Raby, Cllr W Petersen

In attendance:

Mrs S Frankis, Clerk & RFO to Burstall Parish Council  
District Cllr John Whyman

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Gasper.

Cllr Gasper expressed sadness at the passing of Mr N Fiske, a stalwart of the village and a man dedicated to the parish; he will be greatly missed.

### **416 APOLOGIES:** to RECEIVE and APPROVE Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr L Raby for her absence due to a personal commitment. The Council unanimously agreed to approve the absence.  
Apologies were received from District Cllr D Busby.

### **417 DISPENSATIONS:** to RECEIVE Declarations of Interest and/or to APPROVE such Dispensation Requests

None were received.

The meeting was adjourned.

### **418 REPORTS:** to RECEIVE the Reports of the County and District Councillors

A report had been received from District Cllr Whyman and circulated to the Council prior to the meeting.

Cllr Whyman considered Babergh District Council (BDC) should be looking more closely at creating renewable energy zones. If BDC aspires to being proactive with regards to renewable developments, they should try to ensure that proposed applications are developed where they will be less impactful to communities, i.e. on disused airfields. Proposed developments would be considered against a tiered or preferred zoning system, giving greater weight to an application for development on a site higher up the tier. He believes that such a system would protect communities with better outcomes for them; BDC needs to be more proactive in order to protect them.

Cllr Whyman advised that the BDC Planning Committee is reviewing their Planning Charter.

- Cllr Gasper asked why the BDC Planning Committee does not meet regularly; the last 14 meetings have been cancelled, which he considers to be unacceptable and poor practice. Cllr Whyman advised there was no need for the Committee to look at small householder applications and nothing smaller than a 10-dwelling development.

- Cllr Godfrey considered that after his 4-year experience with the BDC Planning Department, there is no confidence in it and there is a feeling that the Planning Department is a law unto itself.
- Cllr Whyman advised that he attends the Parish Council meetings as a representative, and on behalf of BDC.
- Cllr Whyman agreed with the point made by Cllr Godfrey that the Mid Suffolk District Council dealing of the Enso Appeal was unacceptable, leading to a financial cost of over £110k to the public purse.
- Cllr Godfrey called for an aggressive overview of the BDC Planning Department and for individuals to be held accountable.
- Cllr Gasper suggested that Cllr Whyman, as vice-chair of the Planning Committee and vice-chair of the Scrutiny Committee, has a conflict of interests. Matters that come before the Committee for scrutiny come from the chair and vice-chair and so is Cllr Whyman ever likely to push for an investigation of the Planning Committee, one of the departments that requires scrutinising? How can Cllr Whyman be open and transparent by being vice-chair of the Scrutiny Committee, as well as others.  
Cllr Gasper considered that Cllr Whyman should therefore resign from the Scrutiny Committee; Cllr Whyman did not consider there was any conflict of interest.  
Cllr Godfrey asked Cllr Whyman, as vice-chair of the BDC Scrutiny Committee, if he would undertake a scrutiny of the BDC Planning Department.  
Cllr Whyman suggested that Burstall Parish Council should write to the chair of the Scrutiny Committee, if there are concerns.
- Cllr Petersen referred back to Cllr Whyman's opening; if there is a train coming down the line heavily laden with solar farms and energy storage developments, there needs to be landing zones in place to protect communities. BDC needs to have a robust policy in place without delay.
- Cllr Gasper highlighted the position that Burstall finds itself in by not having an active ward member to represent it at the most crucial of times. While the Parish Council finds the situation extremely uncomfortable to address, and of course wishes Cllr Busby all the best, the matter needs resolving.  
**ACTION: The Clerk is to write to BDC to formally advise that Burstall needs an active ward member.**
- Cllr Main asked why Babergh District Council doesn't make pre-planning information available to the public when other councils around the country do?
- Cllr Gasper referred to the £3m loss to be incurred by Babergh District Council from their re-development of their Corks Lane site, together with the £19m loss made by CiFCO, of which Cllr Whyman is a board member.  
Cllr Whyman understands the loss sits around the Contract; he wants the Scrutiny Committee to see the Risk Register, the Risk Policy and to know who is making these financial decisions. There is an element of concern and disquiet amongst BDC cllrs as to how they have ended with a loss and had the risk been understood.  
Contradictorily, Cllr Whyman then went on to question the belief that the project will make a loss and considered that there may even be a profit in the end.  
He advised he had sat on two CiFCO board meetings and agreed with the point made that the historical level of investment was questionable.

- Cllr Petersen referred to the Clearstone Energy update within Cllr Whyman's Report. He advised that other than the proposed bund, which in its current form would be totally inadequate, Clearstone have not included any measures, by which the concerns raised by Burstall Parish Council would be addressed, in their pre-app design.  
Cllr Petersen advised that Cllr Whyman has been given copies of the Burstall Parish Council / Clearstone Energy exchanges to take back to BDC.  
**ACTION: The Clerk is to contact Clearstone Energy to ask for a response to the Burstall Parish Council comments/suggestions made to them nearly two months ago.**
- Cllr Main referred to Suffolk Solar Together, a group buying scheme to purchase solar panel installations, as promoted by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. Through a FOI request, she had asked for the name of the manufacturer of the panels; some of the company names have been associated with slave labour in China and poor environmental performances. She asked why BMSDC are recommending using such companies? Cllr Whyman agreed to find out more.
- Cllr Main reminded Cllr Whyman about an historical FOI request that she was having difficulty with and which he had agreed to help with; Cllr Whyman agreed to refresh his request.
- Cllr Godfrey thanked Cllr Whyman for giving his time to the Parish Council.

No report had been received from County Cllr Hudson.

**419 COMMENTS:** to RECEIVE Comments from Residents of the Parish on Current Agenda Items  
None were received.

The meeting was reconvened.

**420 MINUTES:** to RECEIVE and CONFIRM the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024, having been circulated to the Council prior to the meeting, were confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**421 MATTERS ARISING:** to CONSIDER Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Minute number 395 & 409 The Council unanimously agreed an expenditure budget of up to £250 to buy the replacement glass for the B.T. information box.

**ACTION: Cllr L Raby and the Clerk are to purchase the replacement glass for the B.T. information box and arrange for it to be fitted.**

Minute number 415 remains outstanding.

**ACTION: Cllr Gasper is to deliver the Parish Council records to the Parish Clerk.**

**422 PLANNING**

There were no matters to consider.

**423 FINANCE:**

(i) to APPROVE the October and November 2024 Schedules of Payments

The Council unanimously approved the following payments:

P39. Mrs S Frankis / broadband (POA 1954, s51)	£15.00
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P40. Mrs S Frankis / Sept. salary (LGA 1972, ss101,111,112)	£215.81
P41. HMRC/PAYE, (LGA 1972, ss101,111,112)	£1.60
P42. Nosegay/grass cutting (LGA 1972, s139)	£210.00
P43. HP Instant Ink (LGA 1972, s139)	£3.99
P44. Microsoft 365/software (LGA 1972, s139)	£59.99
P45. Mrs S Frankis / broadband (POA 1954, s51)	£15.00
P46. Mrs S Frankis, Oct. Salary (LGA 1972, ss101,111,112)	£167.82
P47. Nosegay, grass cutting (LGA 1972, s139)	£210.00
P48. HP Instant Ink (LGA 1972, s139)	£3.99

(ii) to AGREE the September and October 2024 Budget and Precept Reports

The September and October 2024 Budget and Precept Reports, having been circulated to the Council prior to the meeting, were agreed. The bank statement balances were verified by Cllr K Raby.

(iii) to AGREE 2025/26 Budget & Precept

The Clerk had circulated a draft 2025/26 budget and precept schedule to the Council prior to the meeting. The Parish Council unanimously agreed to add £500 to the village sign repairs budget line. The overall expectation is that the Parish Council precept demand will be lower than 2024/25.

**424 NEW PAY SCALES:** to AGREE new 2024/25 NJC Pay Scale for the Parish Clerk and to AGREE to Backdate the Increase to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024

The Council unanimously agreed to increase the Clerk’s hourly rate in accordance with the 2024/25 National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) Agreement and to back date the pay increase to 1st April 2024.

The Clerk reminded the Council that a performance related review of her salary was overdue.

**ACTION: The Council agreed to undertake a performance related review of the Clerk’s salary.**

**425 NEXT MEETING:** to CONFIRM the Date and Time of the next Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

Cllr S Godfrey gave his apologies as he will be unable to attend the next meeting.

**426 MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS:** to CONSIDER Matters Raised by Members, including Agenda Items for the Next Meeting

The Clerk advised she had received an email from the parishioner who had requested a grit bin at Cranfield Park, asking for an update, which led her to again, submit a request to Suffolk County Council. The County Council has again refused permission for a grit bin to be installed at Cranfield Park as it does not meet their qualifying criteria – “is it at a junction with known history of accidents or on a sharp/severe bend or has a road gradient greater than 1 in15”.

Cllr Petersen advised there has been nighttime light pollution coming from the EA3 site; he considered that matters such as this should be policed by Babergh District Council.

**ACTION: The Clerk is to let Cllr Whyman know about the nighttime light pollution from the EA3 site.**

Cllr Petersen advised that he has been in correspondence with Babergh District Council since 2018 regarding S106 monies of £129,401.63, collected under the landscaping allocation scheme and asking for them to be released. This correspondence has led to a promised formation of the Strategic Mitigation Planting Group by Ms Bron Curtis, BDC Planning Officer, in June this year.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 21.18.

Signed .....

Date .....