

**MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF BERSTED COUNCIL
HELD AT BERSTED JUBILEE HALL, CHALCRAFT LANE, BERSTED
AT 19:00 ON TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER 2023.**

Present: Cllrs B. Bellhouse, K. Greenway, W. Kapp, M. Lury, P. Ralph, A. Smith, J. Spencer (Chair), A. Van Koolbergen, P. Wells and G. Yeates.

Mrs D. Holcombe (Clerk/RFO), and Ms J. Milson (Community Clerk)

In attendance: 1 member of the public.

- 23230 Apologies for Absence**
Mrs S. O'Connell (Deputy Clerk)
- 23231 Declarations of Interests**
Cllr Lury declared an interest as a member of Arun DC Planning Committee.
Cllr Wells declared an interest in relation to Minute Number 23239 as his company had supplied polo shirts.
- 23232 Councillor Co Option**
Cllr Spencer welcomed the applicant, Mr Phil Woodall. Mr Woodall was invited to say why he wanted to become a Bersted Parish Councillor and took questions from Members. Members then voted and agreed to co-opt Mr Phil Woodall.
Mr Phil Woodall signed the declaration of acceptance of office and joined the meeting.
- 23233 Public Session, None.**
- 23234 Minutes of the Council Meeting 12 September 2023**
RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council Meeting 12 September 2023, having been circulated in advance, be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
- 23235 Matters Arising from the Minutes, None.**
- 23236 Reports from County & District Councillors**
C. Cllr Greenway's report was circulated to Members.
C. Cllr Oppler-no report received.
- District Councillors**
D. Cllr Greenway's report was circulated to Members.
D. Cllr Lury's report was circulated to Members.
Cllr Wells enquired if there was any further update in relation to Bersted Brook Park. Cllr Lury was not aware of any. Cllr Greenway advised he has not been consulted but is aware that a report is being written and an update would be made to Bersted District Councillors in November.
D. Cllr Yeates report was circulated to Members.
Cllr Wells enquired if there was any update on Arun DC housing needs in Bersted, Cllr Yeates confirmed that there are some grants available for improving the EPC rating of homes in Arun and she was hopeful that some Bersted properties could benefit from this. Cllr Yeates also highlighted the new website scheduled to go live next year which should help residents as it is more user friendly.
Written reports received are appended to these minutes.

23237

Committee Minutes

To note the Minutes of the following Meetings.

a) Community Action Committee 19 September.

Cllr Lury stated how grateful he was to the resident making a regular monthly donation to Fresh Food for Families and how much this was going to be a great help.

Cllr Greenway asked what the Community Action Committee had planned for Remembrance Sunday as it is within their Terms of Reference, Cllr Lury apologised that that nothing has been planned in Bersted, but Council Chairman will be laying a wreath on Sunday held at Bognor Town Council as we do every year. Cllr Lury confirmed this would be on a future agenda. It was agreed this would be put onto the Community Action agenda in January in preparation for 2024.

ACTION Community Clerk to agenda Remembrance Sunday item on Community Action for January 2024.

b) Finance Committee 26 September.

Cllr Van Koolbergen advised that the budget which was the main topic in this meeting is an upcoming item and invited questions from Members. No questions from Members.

c) Planning Committee held on 3 October.

Cllr Lury declared an interest as a member of Arun DC Planning Committee and left the meeting at 19:37 and returned 19.40.

Cllr Spencer invited questions from Members. No questions from Members. Cllr Spencer advised Members that the Clerk was informed earlier today that the BE/103/23/T, the felling of 26 No Elm trees, land rear of 12-18 Sunningdale Gardens and adjacent to rife Bersted PO22 9LF application has been withdrawn by the applicant.

23238

Council Tombola 11th November

The Community Clerk requested donations from Councillors for the Tombola which is being run at the Craft Fayre on November 11th.

23239

Financial Matters

To approve the Income and Expenditure Report for September 2023.

The September Income and Expenditure Report had previously been circulated to all members.

Clerk/RFO advised members that this was updated monthly, and that hall lettings income is increasing, and football fixture charges are beginning to come in. The water bill has decreased. Clerk/RFO informed Members that we have had a new gas smart meter installed as the joint smart meter was not registering the reading correctly, so we are expecting a refund. Clerk/RFO confirmed she has submitted the Q2 VAT return today. Clerk/RFO thanked Cllr Greenway for his help with the Budget. The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Income & Expenditure is where she would expect them to be at this stage of the financial year. Members had no questions and approved the statement.

RESOLVED to approve the Income and Expenditure for September 2023.

23240

Additional Account Signatories

To approve the Vice Chair of Council and Finance Committee Chair to become bank signatories. Members approved.

RESOLVED to approve additional account signatories.

ACTION Clerk/RFO to arrange additional account signatories.

23241 **24/25 Budget – First Draft**

- a) To Consider and approve the request from the Planning Committee to have a budget, amount to be agreed.

Cllr Greenway requested this item be deferred until the 24/25 Budget has been looked at more thoroughly and discussions were held, and more clarity was given so Council could decide. Cllr Spencer confirmed that the idea was more to enable this committee to get on and achieve items already budgeted for in support of Council i.e Riparian Responsibility, Emergency Resilience, Environmental Projects and Climate Change and this will be addressed as part of the Planning Committees Terms of Reference review next month. Clerk/RFO confirmed she agreed with Cllr Greenway. Cllr Van Koolbergen, Cllr Yeates and other Members agreed this item should be deferred. Cllr Greenway and Clerk/RFO would like to see Committees having a budget related item every July so this can form part of the budget prep discussions in August.

RESOLVED to defer this agenda item to the Planning Committee 7th November to finalise their proposal for Councils consideration on 14th November.

ACTION Deputy Clerk to add to the next Planning agenda as part of The Terms of Reference Review and Clerk/RFO to add to the next Council agenda.

- b) To consider and approve a first draft budget Clerk/RFO suggested Council concentrate on Cost Centre (CC) numbers 40 down as CC numbers 1-39 had been carefully considered at budget prep meetings in August taking information from Quick Books, and previous year's spending and advisories received in increased costs. The Clerk/RFO reminded Council that this was their budget, and these budget items are their opportunity to have an input and consider their aspirations for the coming financial year, but that said, to also be mindful that some aspirations may need to be noted and considered in future financial years to keep the precept request down. Members focussed on cost centre codes 40-50 to enable Clerk/RFO to formulate the second draft to be drawn up ready for Finance Committee meeting on 28th November, which will in turn return to Council for ratification on January 16th.

Clerk/RFO advised Members there was £5,000 in reserves already for the access road so advised the 15,000 could be lowered to £10,000 in the 24/25 budget which would still achieve £15,000 and assist in reducing the precept.

Following lengthy discussions Members agreed for CC48 to be lowered to 10,000 in the 24/25 budget and CC50 to be removed. Cllr Wells reminded Members that Council had been advised by our external auditors to consider increasing our reserves, which they perceived were too low, he expressed his concerns that we have not covered ourselves sufficiently if there was an emergency repair not covered by our insurance provider or reserves.

Clerk/RFO confirmed that she has scheduled as part of the next finance meeting a review of the Reserves, so there will be an opportunity to consider changes in time for the final budget approval. Cllr Kapp, Bellhouse and Yeates asked Clerk/RFO for further information on how the Reserves can be utilised in an emergency and how the amount of Reserves are calculated by the auditors as sufficient, Clerk/RFO explained that Earmarked Reserves could with Councils approval be amended to free up available Reserves, but Ringed Fenced Reserves cannot be touched. Members agreed more clarity was needed from our auditors about the amount Council should have in Reserves, they asked Clerk/RFO to seek clarity to assist in making budget decisions. Clerk/RFO advised she will look at the small print in AGAR about the maximum number of reserves that can be held at one time and seek clarity so this can be considered at the next budget meeting. Members then voted and gave a majority vote in favour of the amendments and for this to go forward to the Finance Committee to review.

Cllr Wells voted against the amendments to the first draft. Cllr Greenway offered assistance, if required when Chair of Finance and Clerk/RFO have their next review in preparation for the second draft budget and Reserves review prior to November's Finance meeting.

RESOLVED to revise CC48 to £10,000 and remove CC50 of £1,000.

ACTION Clerk/RFO to review the AGAR Reserve regulations and seek clarity on the amount of Reserves advised for Council and draft the budget for the next finance committee meeting.

23242

Parish Reports

- a) **Chair**
Cllr Spencer's report was circulated.
- b) **Vice Chair**
Cllr Yeates' report was circulated.
- c) **Clerk/RFO**
The Clerk's report was circulated.
- d) **Deputy Clerk**
The Deputy Clerk's report was circulated.
- e) **Community Clerk**
The Community Clerk's report was circulated.
Cllr Lury enquired if we had secured music entertainment for Tea and Coffee this month. Community Clerk advised that it had.
- f) **Councillor Reports**
Cllrs Smith, Greenway and Van Koolbergen's reports were circulated.
Written reports received are appended to these minutes.

23243

Correspondence (All correspondence has been circulated in advance of the meeting).

- a) Further correspondence received after agenda.
- b) Infrastructure-Thursdays 12th October, 11am.
- c) Willow pond clear up - Sunday 15th October, 10am- Cllr Wells sends apologies.
- d) Tea & Coffee - Monday 16th October at 2pm.
- e) Parish Litter Pick - Saturday 21st October, 11am

(Cllr Greenway advised this is on the Trees Estate, meeting at Laurel Grove. Arun and Biffa will also be in attendance).

- f) Spinney clear up - Sunday 22nd October, 10am.
- g) Personnel meeting - Tuesday 24th October, 7pm.
- h) Planning meeting - Tuesday 7th November at 7pm.
- i) Council meeting - Tuesday 14th November at 7pm.
- j) Tea & Coffee - Monday 20th November at 2pm.
- k) Community Action meeting - Tuesday 21st November at 7pm.
- l) Climate Change working group meeting - Thursday 23rd November at 7pm tbc.
- m) Finance meeting - Tuesday 28th November at 7pm.

23244

Urgent Matters, None.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:33

Signed Chairman Date