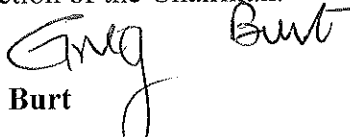




To All Councillors,

You are summoned to a meeting of Billingshurst Parish Council on **Wednesday 4 January 2023 at 7.30pm** at **Billingshurst Centre**

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting and speak for a maximum of three minutes about an item on the agenda for this meeting during the Public Session at the discretion of the Chairman.


G.C. Burt
Clerk to the Council

22 December 2022

AGENDA

1. Chairman's Announcements.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider any requests for a dispensation.

Adjournment for

4. Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman).
5. Reports from:
 - a. County Councillor and District Councillors
 - b. Council Representatives on Outside Bodies.

Resume Meeting

6. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 November 2022. (Previously sent)
7. Matters Arising – that are not separate agenda items
8. To consider RECOMMENDATIONS
 - i. From the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 14 December 2022 to approve a revenue Budget of £607,723 for 2022-23 (Minute 129/22 (b) refers)
 - ii. From the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 14 December 2022 to approve a Precept of £490,586 for 2022-23 (Minute 129/22 (c) refers)

(Please refer to your F&GP Agenda and Mins of 14 Dec 2022 for supporting information.)

9. To consider a proposal on Climate Change from Cllr Phillip Day – Appendix A.
10. To receive approved Minutes as approved by the following Committees:

- a) Planning & Environment 6 Oct and 3 Nov 2022
- b) F&GP 26 Oct 2022
- c) Property 6 Oct 2022

(all previously circulated / on website.)

- 11. Neighbourhood Wardens - to receive reports for Oct and Nov – prev. circulated / on website.
- 12. Any other matters for information only.
- 13. Date of Next Meeting – **1 March 2023**

Members of the public should be aware that being present at a meeting of the Council or one of its Committees or Sub-Committees will be deemed as the person having given consent to being recorded (photograph, film or audio recording) at the meeting, by any person present.

APPENDIX A

Dear fellow Councillors,

You will know that, on Thursday 20th October, I attended a Climate Change workshop in Horsham, kindly hosted by Horsham District Council. It was held in their Parkside offices and the day was conducted by an organisation called the Centre for Sustainable Energy. I was joined by Mela Davidson of the Billigreen organisation.

At the end of the day, I came away with what I think are three key messages.

1. There are many different strands to the problem of climate change – pollution, energy security, cost, ecological effects from plastics, food waste.....I could go on – and the overriding message to me was that the problem was too big to address as a single topic. It needed to be broken down into bite-sized chunks.
2. Many of our peer Parish Councils throughout the UK are well advanced in their thinking and acting in this arena. Many councils are being very proactive in leading their local communities in developing and implementing actions that, maybe small of themselves, all add up to awareness, commitment and support to the ideas relating to climate change
3. A Chinese proverb says “A journey of a thousand miles start with a single step”.

In preparation for the event, attendees were invited to view a You Tube production featuring Sir Patrick Vallance, the Government’s chief scientific advisor, during his address to MPs at a virtual meeting hosted by the Green Party MP Caroline Lucas. It is not party political, and he describes the causes and effects in graphic detail. I invite you to watch it for yourselves at [Sir Patrick Vallance briefs MPs on climate science - YouTube](#)

There was a follow-on Zoom meeting of participants of the original workshop, held on 23rd November, which helped to consolidate my understanding of the enormity, both of the task and the potential.

I have conducted a small, and possibly incomplete, survey of our policies and promotional material. I have found the following references to the environment, climate change and healthy living. They do not, in my view, form a coherent and cohesive message from the Council to the world about the seriousness of the threat of climate change to our village as part of the world in which we live. The references I have found are

1. Billingshurst draft Neighbourhood plan for consultation (dated July 2019) Sustainability Statement - Objective 5 refers to flood risk, climate change and carbon footprint reduction, and Objective 1 refers to sustainable energy.
2. Council Minutes 100/21 the Men’s Shed – recycling
3. Items in respect of Water Neutrality, mainly as it affects residential building development, and a response to the WRSE regional plan consultation.
4. In the Planning and Environment Sub-committee, there are comments about environmental issues when considering major developments.

As a council, we have no expressly articulated policy in relation to climate change, no specific items that need to be considered for all matters that come before the Council for decision, and nothing on our website – our shop window for parishioners – to signify that we are cognisant of the requirement and are addressing it.

It is true that we, as a Council, do undertake some actions in respect to the environment in general which feeds through into the climate change narrative. These include:-

1. Sort most of the litter we collect from streets into recyclables and non recyclable and dispose of accordingly. We also have a recycling bin at the Centre.
2. Planted a living roof on a bus stop roof.
3. Changing the lighting throughout the Centre to low energy and/or motion sensors.
4. Agreed to Billigreen's suggestion of leaving areas throughout our estate un-mowed to encourage biodiversity.
5. Agreed to host EV charging points at the Centre.
6. Installed many bird and bat boxes made by the Men's Shed.
7. Planted 27 trees throughout the village in Autumn 2019.

In my view, the items mentioned above, whilst imminently praiseworthy in themselves, do not convey the sense of urgency that climate change demands. It conveys to me more a sense of opportunism than purpose. Also, they do not demonstrate to our parishioners that the Council is open to taking the initiative, but happy to respond to opportunities.

I believe that the membership of this council comprises people who will take this matter seriously, will support a more proactive and cohesive approach and will enthusiastically embrace a policy that places climate change at the centre of every deliberation, decision and recommendation that is demanded of it.

You may ask "How to go about this?" There are four specific areas where the Council can take action. These can be categorised as-

1. Direct Control. This relates to the Council owned and/or controlled property and operations. E.g, The installation of solar panels on Council property,
2. Procurement and Commissioning. This relates to goods and services that the Council acquires for the Parish. E.g Requiring maintenance services to use electric machinery.
3. Future shaping. This relates to the ability of the Council to influence the way in which the parish will live, work and enjoy recreation. E.g. Host a car-sharing website for parishioners.
4. Engagement. This relates to communicating with parishioners to share ideas and spark individual and local groups to contribute to the cause. E.g. Host a series of Climate /Ecology workshops with Billigreen and other local groups in brainstorming practical ideas that can be promulgated to parishioners.

Next steps.

I have been advised that the next steps should be in the form of a short-term action plan, easily and cheaply deliverable and not complicated.

Therefore, I recommend the following actions for the Council to undertake-

1. Declare a recognition of a state of Climate and Environment Emergency, and promote this on the Council's Website and other social media sites to which it subscribes.
2. Decide how the Council can best deliver the required actions, identifying who should spearhead the initiative.
3. Set aside a small financial budget, say £5,000, for 2023/2024 that can support the Council's modest investment in the future, e.g. planting more trees.

I would like the topic of Climate and Environment Emergency on the Council Agenda at the earliest opportunity.

Phillip