

Minutes of the Meeting of the Great Burstead and South Green Village Council, held at
Canon Roche Social Centre, Laindon Road, Billericay,
on Wednesday 3rd August 2011 at 7.30pm

Present:

Councillor M Dear - Chair

Councillor Wakelin

Councillor Cundy

Councillor John Dear

Councillor Thomson

Councillor Lawrence

Councillor Kelly

Clerk of the Council: Karen Hawkes

Democratic Services Manager: Paul Burkinshaw

Manager of Legal and Corporate Governance: Lisa Hamilton

11/146 Chairman's Welcome

The chair welcomed those present to the meeting and thanked Paul Burkinshaw and Lisa Hamilton for their attendance.

11/147 Apologies

Apologies received from Councillor Aly-Khan due to holiday commitments.

11/148 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest received.

11/149 Minutes

Minutes of the 6th July will be approved at the 7th September Village Council meeting.

11/150 The Council resolves to exclude the press and public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, due to:

- **engagement, terms of service, conduct and dismissal of employees**
- **the early stages of any dispute**

11/151: Addressing issues within the Council

Paul Burkinshaw and Lisa Hamilton introduced themselves to the Village Council and explained their roles within the Borough Council. Lisa Hamilton and Paul Burkinshaw stated that their attendance is to support the Village Council and provide guidance.

- **Code of Conduct:** Paul Burkinshaw and Lisa Hamilton stated all Councillors sign up to the Code of Conduct and their behaviour as a Councillor must be of a higher standard than perhaps what is classed as acceptable within the Councillors private life, the Councillors are the elected representative of the Village and their behaviour and attitude within the meeting must reflect this important role. The Clerk expressed concerns about the Code of Conduct within the meeting and by email and that because of the current attitude of Councillors towards the clerk and some other members of the Council the Council is not moving forward in the productive way that they should, the clerk is also unable to perform her job effectively. A complaint had been made to the Standards Board regarding Councillor Kelly's behaviour and the results of this complaint are that the Village Councillors would all receive training in the Code of Conduct and receive a letter from Basildon Council stating the importance of the Code of Conduct. Since the results of this complaint the clerk has resigned and expressed concerns that

whoever is employed as the new clerk would feel intimidated by particular Councillors behaviour and if they were new to clerking could act ultra vires as Councillors in the past have not listened to the advice of the clerk and try to act outside of the meeting. Lisa Hamilton stated that the clerk could make a complaint to the standards board if she felt that this was necessary to stop a future clerk being treated in the same manner.

- Decision making process: clerk explained that the decision making process is very simple; all decisions are made within the meeting and not by email. The clerk stated that during her time as clerk a particular Councillor has completed grant applications and returned them to the grant provider stating items which have not been discussed or agreed in a full council meeting. Paul Burkinshaw confirmed that all applications must be made by the clerk and prior to this the views/commitments of the Village Council expressed on the form must have been agreed in a Village Council meeting. The clerk stated that approx one week prior to the agenda being set a request for agenda items is sent to all Councillors, as long as the Councillor has the information needed for the item to be discussed then the item will go on the agenda. Once the item has been agreed in the Council meeting the clerk will act on decisions made within the meeting.
- The role of Councillors and the Clerk: document circulated from Clerks Cilca identifying the role and responsibilities of the Clerk and Councillor. Paul Burkinshaw circulated a document entitled role of the clerk and the clerk's relationship with Councillors and others. Paul Burkinshaw stated that the clerk takes instruction from the whole Council not an individual Councillor.
- Electronic communications: Councillors expressed that a high volume of emails are sent and some of these can be offensive. Discussed earlier in the meeting what the decision making process is, this should cut down the amount of emails sent as discussions will take place within the meeting not online.
- Moving forward: Basildon Council will arrange for Code of Conduct training at a future date, Councillor Kelly requests that the Council receive diversity training this will also be arranged. Lisa Hamilton stated that for the council to move forward a line needs to be drawn under what has happened in the past. A representative from Basildon Council will attend future Village Council meetings for as long as required.

11/152 Meeting Closed

Meeting closed at 9.05pm.