

BUCKDEN PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BUCKDEN PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT BUCKDEN VILLAGE INSTITUTE ON MONDAY 12th September 2022 at 7.00PM

Those present:

Chairman: Councillor P Breen

Councillors: Councillor P Ramsden and Councillor P Vetch

Also Present: Four members of the public

2223/50

Chairman's remarks

Councillor Breen explained that he had received advice from various organisations regarding the conduct of council meetings in the light of the death of the monarch. Much of this was targeted at much larger organisations however he proposed that a minute's silence should be held as a mark of respect for the Queen's outstanding public service.

A one-minute silence was observed.

Councillor Breen drew the attention of councillors to a YDNPA Parish Forum to be held online on 12th October. Link available on request.

He advised that no ward grant could be claimed for the litter pickers which had been purchased.

He reported that the CCTV cabling has been removed with the exception of one piece at Buckden House which was not accessible due to height. It has been cut and tied back to the satisfaction of the Buckden House team.

He drew councillors' attention to training available through YLCA.

He advised that there was no further clarity from Clarke Telecom regarding the timing of the new 4G mobile mast. Councillor Vetch advised that Clarke Telecom had stated it would be complete of end of 2024 as that was end date of the national Rural Broadband project. It may be earlier. They also advised that the Buckden site had not yet gone for planning approval.

Councillor Breen stated that item 2223/62 Item a would be brought forward to item 2223/54.

2223/51

Apologies and reasons for Absence

Apologies and reasons for absence had been received from Councillor Way and Councillor Jarrett – these were noted and accepted.

2223/52

Disclosures of Interest

None

2223/53

Minutes of the Previous Meetings

Resolved that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council on Monday 8th August 2022 be signed as a true and accurate record.

2223/54

Public Participation

A member of the public raised the Warm Spaces initiative and spoke about the causes and potential impact of the energy crisis, as well as potential actions which might be taken to support the more vulnerable members of the community. She presented a paper which is attached to these minutes. A discussion followed. Councillor Breen acknowledged the issues and said that that the network of support in the community must ensure that that individuals in need are identified and supported. He asked that councillors should review the paper and that said that the item would be brought back to the next meeting. **Resolved** that Councillor Breen would write to Councillor Foster to understand how NYCC propose to manage the issue.

No other matters were raised

2223/55

Reports from District / County Councillors

No councillors were present at the meeting.

2223/56

Highways Matters

a) To receive an update on footpaths in the parish and consider any action required

Councillor Breen reported that the NT had responded positively to the request from the council to maintain paths within the village and have already cleared the Firth Demesne to Manor House, car park and Mullions paths, and intend to clear the path from Firth Demesne to The Croft. They have also indicated a willingness to deal with the Japanese Knotweed issue. A member of the public raised the issue of whether they would also address knotweed which had spread onto adjacent properties from NT land. This concern was recognised. Councillor Ramsden stated that he had received two quotations from commercial organisations which are on hold.

b) To consider any highways issues in the parish and any action required

Councillor Breen noted that Seal Bank has not been cleared in accordance with the commitments made by Area 5 in spite of the fact that Councillor Vetch had raised this issue again with Sharon Fox after the last meeting. He has now escalated the issue to Councillor Foster, asking for his help..

c) To receive an update from the Road Safety Working Group

No update was available. This item was deferred until the next meeting.

2223/57

Planning

No applications have been received for consideration.

2223/58

Emergency Planning

Councillor Vetch has not managed to get an update from Mr Rangeley due to holidays. He will get an update before the next meeting.

2223/59

Land Registry Project

Councillor Vetch reported that he had had a long meeting with the Land Registry. Due to a backlog of work the Parish Land Registration Project has been deferred and indications are that it could not take place for up to 3-4 years. Buckden will still be invited to participate when it does go ahead. During the meeting the opportunity was taken to discuss the specific issues in Buckden Parish and it is clear that progress can be made in advance of the LR project. Councillor Vetch will produce a risk analysis based on the information provided, which will categorise each piece of land in the register produced in Q4 2022. The categories will include: Proceed to self-register; defer to project; engage in informal discussions with interested parties; no further action justified. This will be available no later than the November meeting for review by the councillors.

2223/60

Bonfire

It was agreed that the bonfire should take place on Saturday 5th November. There was a discussion about the desirability (or otherwise) of fireworks. Councillors will take soundings in the community including both dog owners and others.

2223/61

Frequency of Parish Council Meetings

Councillor Breen proposed moving to a bi-monthly meeting cycle. Those present were in favour but queried how planning applications could be dealt with in a timely manner. Councillor Breen will explore this. It was agreed that this item should be deferred to the next meeting at which all councillors are present.

2223/62

Correspondence

- a) To consider an email from Stella Perrott concerning a 'Warm Spaces initiative' – Discussed as part of Item 2223/54
- b) To consider email from Robin Davidson regarding financial support for energy used in hosting Vodafone mobile phone signal booster station. – Discussed and **resolved** that Councillor Breen would discuss with Mr Davidson.
- c) To consider and note the 'Review of Car Park By-Laws' by YDNP – Considered and noted
- d) To note alterations to the Electoral Register - Noted
- e) To consider request for support for Citizens Advice Bureau – It was agreed that no donation should be made.

2223/63

Finance

- a) **The bank statement was received and noted.** The bank balance at the 31st August was as follows: Unity Trust T1 account: £8816.51
- b) **Resolved to approve the following payments:**
 - To Mr Davidson for cost of Vodafone service

- To Councillor Vetch for the cost of two years registration of the buckden.org domain name with Namesco Ltd. - £67.19

2223/64 **Resolved** that members of the press and public be excluded from item 2223/65 under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960 s1(2)) during consideration of items of a confidential nature. (staffing matters)

2223/65 **Staffing Matters**
The Council discussed the recruitment a new clerk. A new applicant has been identified. Councillor Breen is awaiting receipt of her application.

2223/66 **Date of the next meeting**
The next meeting of Buckden Parish Council will be held at 7pm on Monday 10th October 2022.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

The Clerk should be given seven clear days' notice of items for the agenda of the next meeting.

Att.: Energy and cost of living briefing

Attachment 1

Buckden Parish Council 12 July 2022: Energy and cost of living briefing

Energy price increases: nationally

On the day of the latest cap announcement (28 July) Martin Lewis, moneysaving expert, [broadcast a video](#) in which he explained the anticipated rise in the cost of domestic energy, why it was rising so steeply and the likely bills families would face.

(At its simplest) the price of gas and electricity is based on the wholesale price of gas. While gas is bought on the wholesale markets on a daily basis, it is mostly bought several months in advance, and it is the 'advance' price that determines the cap.

When the media talk about the 'price cap' they are usually quoting figures for *combined* gas and electricity consumption (most people in the UK are reliant on gas and electricity rather than oil or solid fuel) of the 'average' household. The cap is applied per kilowatt hour, so the more energy used the higher the bill; the bill is not capped. It also pertains only to the 'default standard tariff' which most people (over 80% are on). Those on fixed price tariffs will remain so until the end of the tariff period and those on pre-payment meters will pay more.

For the average household, 83% of energy costs are for heating. So, heating is the main source of costs and 'savings'.

Gas and electricity prices have risen by 40% already this year and, without government intervention, will rise by a further 70% on October 1 with a smaller, as-yet unknown, rise in January 2023. Average household combined gas and electricity bills rise from £2,000 per annum to £3,500 per annum this October and to £4,266 in January 2023.

Bills are likely to be much greater for those who are disabled or at home all day, particularly those who are less mobile or who have young families.

Government help

All households will get £400 off their energy bills in October. This will be in the form of a grant over the winter paid directly to households which will be recouped by the energy companies from all consumers over time.

An additional £650 will be paid to people on means-tested benefits and people with disabilities will be eligible for £150. Pensioners receiving the winter fuel (usually £100-200) allowance will get a further £300.

The government, in the [announcement on September 9](#), has said the 15% 'green levy' will be suspended and it will introduce an 'Energy Price Guarantee' (EPG) which will limit the unit price that can be charged to 34.0p/kWh for electricity (plus 46.36p pd standing charge) and 10.3p/kWh (plus 28.49p pd standing charge) for gas. This will come into effect on October 1. The EPG will remain in place for two years although the level of subsidy may change.

The average household bill is expected to be £2,500 from October (prior to the announcement it was expected to be £3,500). This would still double the price from December 2021 to October 2022 (approximately £1000 to £2500) but raise the costs by only a quarter on today's (September's) bills.

No announcements have been made about how to support households reliant on calor gas or oil, but help is expected.

No announcements have been made on how the government will support industry, small businesses, public and voluntary organisations including churches and village halls. The energy price is capped only for households.

Energy price increases: locally

The fuel mix is a bit different in rural areas. There is no piped gas, the most widely used fuel in the UK. More people heat their homes with oil or solid fuel and use calor gas or electricity for cooking. Many homes are all electric.

To understand the individual impact, it might be easiest to start with last year's winter bills. Since December 2021 and incorporating the changes that have already taken place and those now expected the following multipliers can give indicative costs.

- Electricity and gas will double by October, calor gas costs may rise more if government help is not forthcoming.
- Heating oil currently sits at about 50% higher than December 2021 (fluctuates significantly). Prices generally rise over the winter and there will be additional demand.
- Wood has risen by about 15% (varies according to timing of rises and supplier).

Rural communities have a higher number of people at home all day. Heating is 83% of average bills.

Impact of price rises and fuel poverty

The expected price rise means 'average' energy costs could consume nearly one third of the state pension. Fuel poverty is defined as having to spend more than 10% of disposable income (after tax, NI and housing costs) on energy so, even with the recent government help, many families will be driven into fuel poverty.

Prior to the recent government announcement, Martin Lewis estimated that it would plunge and additional 10,000 households into poverty. [National Energy Action](#) (NEA) estimate over eight million, or one third of households, will be in fuel poverty this year.

10,000 people currently die in the UK every year from the cold. Cold and damp housing costs the NHS £1.3bn in related illnesses. The poorest households tend to live in the most inefficient and fuel-costly homes with poor insulation, poor draught proofing and an absence of double glazing.

Suggested measures to reduce energy use (short showers, energy efficient appliances, turning heating down and lights off etc.) will, at best reduce consumption by £120-£150 per annum (a useful saving when energy was about £1000 per annum but is just a small proportion of £4000).

Rationing

An additional problem this year is the possibility of energy rationing because of the war in Ukraine. The pressure is on gas supplies and, as these are used to generate electricity, electricity is the energy source that would be rationed, most likely at peaks hours (morning and evening). European countries have already developed plans to reduce demand, cut public building consumption and prepare the public for the possibility of rationing.

The UK government has said (so far) that rationing in the UK will not be necessary. It is not clear if price alone will suppress demand sufficiently (EU countries have pegged electricity prices for consumers at half the UK rate).

If there is rationing, there could be periods in the day when there is no electricity. Most heating systems rely on electricity to function.

Warm spaces – sometimes called warm banks

Turning off their heating is the only option for many people, and warm spaces have been suggested as an alternative. Warm spaces are places where there is heating and, where possible, access to warm drinks and food and perhaps Wi-Fi or TVs or any other resources. Advice on energy saving or debt counselling may also be provided.

Local authorities, village halls and churches are beginning to consider what may need to be done but these buildings are all impacted by the cost of energy increases – **with no cap and 20% VAT**. Schools, libraries and other public buildings may cut opening hours to save on fuel, thus exacerbating the problem.

Pubs are already closing because they are unable to afford the new energy contracts being offered.

While people may welcome spending a bit more time in places that they like to be in and are warm (e.g. pubs, libraries) they may be reluctant to go to a designated 'warm space' just to keep warm and, in a rural area, getting to one may be problematic.

Role of local authorities and parish councils

Craven is just beginning discussions. Some local authorities may pay the cost of keeping some of their buildings open and warm (most likely libraries). Some councils are offering between £50-£500 for organisations to set up warm spaces. £500 may not go very far.

Under resilience planning legislation the parish council can have almost any role it chooses. As a starting point it might consult about the extent of need and the options available for meeting it.

Some questions to consider:

- A. How aware are local residents about the price rises and do they understand what they will mean for them personally? Is there a need for information provision and helping people calculate the rises that they may face, depending on their energy mix and likely consumption
- B. What is the likely impact for individuals and for the community overall? What is the scale of the likely problem? Is an individual or whole community response appropriate?
- C. What steps can people take to ameliorate the impact at home? And is there a role for the local authority or parish council – giving advice or funds for insulation, secondary glazing, hot water bottles, blankets etc.? Would homeowners need assistance to implement measures?
- D. If C is insufficient, too costly to be effective or not doable in the short-term or on the scale needed, what further steps need to be taken – warm banks, subsidising heating?

Stella Perrott 12 September 2022