

# Burlescombe Parish Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting of the Burlescombe's Caretaker Parish Council  
on Tuesday, 25 June 2024 at the Westleigh URC Hall

## BACKGROUND

Mid Devon District Council had appointed four MDDC Councillors to act as a Caretaker Parish Council following the resignation of Burlescombe Parish Council and the Clerk.

The Caretaker Parish Council had appointed Mrs S McGeever to act as an Interim Clerk to call the meeting and sign of the paperwork required for the External Audit by the due date of 1 July 2024.

Mrs McGeever had duly called the meeting on 18 June 2024 to conduct the business outline in the agenda for the meeting and published on the noticeboards throughout the parish.

The Parish Council website and the associated email addresses had been taken down following the resignations of the Parish Council and Clerk.

**Present:** Councillors Bradshaw and Clist (MDDC District Councillors for the Upper Culm and Councillors Lock and Westcott (MDDC District Councillors for Canonsleigh) together with Mrs McGeever, Interim Clerk.

Members of the Caretaker Parish Council RESOLVED to elect Councillor Westcott to take the Chair for this meeting.

Proposer: Councillor Clist, Seconder: Councillor Bradshaw and approved.

## **25062024/1 Welcome by the Caretaker Chairman, apologies for absence and introductions**

Councillor Westcott opened the meeting at 7.20pm and welcomed those present. There were no apologies to record.

The Mid Devon District Councillors introduced themselves to the members of the public present and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to sign off the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for Burlescombe Parish Council.

A new Parish Council was due to be elected on 27 June 2024 and it would be up to the new councillors to make their own decisions on the way forward.

## **25062024/2 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest or dispensation requested at the meeting.

## **25062024/3 Minutes of Previous meetings**

Members of the Caretaker Parish Council did not feel in a position to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 16 May 2024 as only Councillor Westcott had been present. The minutes would be referred to the new Parish Council given that no set of minutes appeared to have been produced by the Clerk following the resignations that took place.

## **25062024/4 Public Participation**

Members of the public present were interested members of the public and those that had put themselves forward to the Parish Council election on 27 June 2024.

Those present raised their concerns about the taking down of the website (burlescombe.org) which was contracted to run to 2025.

Putting down standing orders, the Councillor Westcott advised that she was given to understand that the possibility of re-instating the website was under review bearing in mind that the company were in breach of contract.

The Interim Clerk advised that the Devon Association of Local Councils and the Monitoring Officer at Mid Devon District Council may be able to provide advice. In the meantime, in order to meet statutory requirements MDDC would be hosting information relating to Burlescombe Parish Council on their Parish Council page on the MDDC website.

Councillor Westcott then re-instated standing orders.

### **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24**

The Caretaker Parish Council noted the following:

- The authority should receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval

### **25062024/5 Internal Auditor's Report**

The Caretaker Parish Council considered the written report provided by the Internal Auditor and the completed Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24.

Given that the internal auditor had ticked 'YES' to boxed A-E and G-J relating to the authority complying with its financial obligations, the Caretaker Parish Council believed that the reports prepared by the previous Clerk were applicable. Box F related to 'petty cash payments' which the parish council did not use.

It was noted that boxes L-M relating the publication of the 2022/23 Annual Governance and Accountability Return had been ticked 'NO'. Given the website had been taken down, the Internal Auditor was not in a position to verify this information.

It would be for the new Parish Council to consider the Internal Auditor's Report in detail and take any action it deemed appropriate to improve financial accountability.

Councillor Westcott suspended standing orders to take questions from the floor on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return before re-instating standing orders.

### **25062024/6 Annual Governance Statement**

The Caretaker Parish Council RESOLVED to sign the Annual Governance Statement as prepared by the previous Clerk.

Proposer: Councillor Clist, Seconder: Councillor Lock, Decision: unanimous

The document was duly signed by the Caretake Chair and Interim Clerk.

**25062024/7 Accounting Statements**

The Caretaker Parish Council RESOLVED to sign the Accounting Statements as prepared and signed by the previous Clerk.

Proposer: Councillor Clist, Seconder: Councillor Lock, Decision: unanimous

The document was duly signed by the Caretake Chair.

The previous Clerk has also prepared the Certificate of Exemption given that the gross income and gross expenditure of the Parish Council did not exceed the limit of £25,000 in the year of account ending 31 March 2024.

The Caretaker Parish Council RESOLVED to sign the Certificate of Exemption as prepared by the previous Clerk.

Proposer: Councillor Clist, Seconder: Councillor Lock, Decision: unanimous

The document was duly signed by the Caretake Chair and Interim Clerk.

**25062024/8 Date for the public rights period**

To meet the statutory requirements, the dates for the public rights period were set at 1 July 2024 to 9 August 2024.

The form and the required declaration would be completed by the Interim Clerk and post on the Mid Devon District Council website and the parish noticeboards.

The form would direct parishioners to the MDDC website to view the accounting documentation.

**25062024/9 Date of the Council Meeting**

The Caretaker Parish Council RESOLVED to leave the date of the next council meeting to the Parish Council elected on 27 June 2024.

Councillor Westcott closed the meeting at 8.25pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_