

Shire of Denmark

Minutes



BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD IN COUNCIL'S RECEPTION ROOM, 953 SOUTH COAST HIGHWAY, DENMARK, THURSDAY, 2nd MARCH 2017, COMMENCING 6.30PM.

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Council Committee Meeting

2 March 2017

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1. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

The Presiding Person opened the meeting at 6.33pm.

2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCEMEMBERS: (Voting)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Ross McDougall	C.B.F.C.O
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Lez Baines	D.C.B.F.C.O
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cr Mark Allen	Council Representative / Chairman
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Patrick McConigley	East Denmark Proxy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Mike Hills	Harewood FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Bruce Pringle	Kordabup FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mrs Gail Guthrie	Mehniup Proxy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Joe Baker	Ocean Beach FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms Sam Blythe	Owingup FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Ivars Sulcs	Peaceful Bay FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Sid Marshall	Scotsdale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Roger Seeney	Somerset Hill Proxy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Alex Williams	Hazelvale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Brian Vigus	Tingledale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms Joan Merrifield	William Bay FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Kevin Hard	Parryville FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Gary Stanway	VFRS Captain
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Adrian Kranendonk	F.W.O./ Mt Shadforth FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Jean-Marc Merat	Nornalup FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Craig Hughes	Camarthen Proxy

MEMBERS: (Non-Voting)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Tim Wall	DFES Area Officer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Wes Bailye	DPaW Fire Coordinator

STAFF: (Non-Voting)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Marcus Owen	Community Emergency Services Manager / Secretary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Gregg Harwood	Director of Community & Regulatory Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mrs Charmaine Shelley	Ranger

ATTENDEES: (Non-Voting)

Ms Kelly MacLeod
 Ms Suzanne Bright
 Mr Bryce Edwards
 Mr Paul Ashton - Australian Blue Gum Plantations

APOLOGIES:

Mr Chris Hoare	East Denmark FCO
Mr Callum Baxter	Somerset Hill FCO
Mr Malcolm Hick	Mt Lindesay FCO
Mr Don Atkinson	Town FCO

ABSENT: NilDECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Nil

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PERSON PRESIDING

Nil

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Responses to questions asked by Cyril Edwards, taken on notice at the 10th November Meeting;

- 1) How brigade Secretaries and FCOs were to be kept informed as to the changes in their members' skills levels now that the online eAcademy system had been introduced.

Once a volunteer has submitted their request for a specific training course an automatic email is sent to the FCO asking them to 'Approve' or 'Not Approve' the application; it could be at this stage that the FCO can record who has applied to do what and pass the information on to relevant brigade officers.

- 2) Asked about hydrant maintenance and blue reflectors and the fate of the repair lists that he had put through to DFES over recent years.

The Water Corp is responsible for hydrant repairs.

- *Blue reflectors are no longer used.*
- *There is an online Hydrant Works Request form for hydrant repairs available on the Volunteer Portal.*
- *When Water Corp commences their in-fill program they will also be checking all the current hydrants at the same time.*
- *I can't comment on what has happened to repair lists already submitted to DFES in recent years as I don't know.*

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

5.1 Committee Meeting Minutes

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION & **COMMITTEE RESOLUTION** ITEM 5.1

Moved: Brian Vigus

Seconded: Les Baines

That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on the 10th November 2016 be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

Carried: Unanimous

5.2 Matters Arising From Minutes

5.2.1 Command Vehicle

The Chief FCO prepared a funding application which was subsequently submitted to Lotterywest requesting \$47,887. To date no notification has been received as to the success of this application.

A letter has been received, dated 13th February 2017, from Lotterywest notifying the Shire that the grant application for \$47,887 has been successful.

5.2.2 Management of Town-site Unallocated Crown Land (UCL)

The CESM has been informed, by DFES Great Southern, that DFES Great Southern has been successful in securing a significant increase in funding for

this financial year for mitigation work on UCL/UMR land. Notification of allocations will be given soon.

\$12,000 has been allocated to Denmark for 2016/17.

Work has been started on the UCL (Lot 159) to the rear of the properties on Payne Rd, Weeden Hill.

A fuel reduction burn is planned for the UCL bounded by Ocean Beach Rd, Zimmermann St, the Water Corp reserve and Blossoms Nursery. It is expected to conduct this burn in March 2017.

Two small areas of UCL at the end of Honeymyrtle Court are also being cleaned up.

5.2.3 Alternate Bridge Crossing

At the November BFAC the committee moved the following motion;

COMMITTEE DECISION

Moved: Roger Seeney

Seconded: Alex Williams

That BFAC requests that the CESM write a letter, addressed to Council:

- 1) *Voicing full support for the construction of a second bridge and endorsing option 3B (choose from either 3B or 3E) as BFAC's preferred option.*
- 2) *Expressing BFAC's concerns with regard to public safety and evacuation generally and in particular regarding getting additional firefighting resources into the district in the event that access into Denmark is compromised in some way either due to an evacuation being called, an accident or natural event that affects the current bridge or its approaches or the long term impact of increasing congestion due to Denmark's predicted growth.*

Joan Merrifield moved an amended motion which was seconded by Chris Hoare that sought to shorten point one to read "Voicing full support for the construction of a second bridge" so that all reference to a preferred bridge option were removed. This was lost 8 for verses 11 against and the Officer Recommendation became the substantive motion.

Carried: 14/4 Adrian Krannendonk, Malcolm Hick, Don Atkinson & Chris Hoare asked that their names be recorded as voting against the motion and Joan Merrifield left the room at the time of the vote on the substantive motion.

The resultant letter from BFAC has been referred to Council as part of its decision making process on the bridge and Council has acknowledged the receipt of the letter.

6. TABLED ITEMS

Nil

7. OFFICER REPORTS

7.1 Department of Fire and Emergency Services

DFES Area Officer Tim Wall provided a report to the Committee.

7.2 Department of Parks and Wildlife

DPaW Fire Coordinator Wes Bailye provided a report to the Committee.

7.3 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Ross McDougall provided a report to the Committee.

7.4 Community Emergency Services Manager

Community Emergency Services Manager Marcus Owen provided a report to the Committee.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

8.1 Permit to Burn Standing Bush

In light of events in November 2016 where a landowner set fire to bush on his property which resulted in the fire escaping onto two of his neighbouring properties, concerns were raised and the idea floated by several FCOs that consideration should be given to imposing permits to burn standing bush for the whole period outside the Prohibited Burning Time.

At the time the property owner did not require a permit to burn as the start of the Restricted Burning Time had been postponed. The Restricted Burning Time was to have started on 1st November but had been pushed back by two weeks due to the seasonal conditions.

In lighting the fire the property owner demonstrated a degree of negligence for the safety of himself and his neighbours by not being properly prepared, by not having adequate firefighting equipment, poorly constructed firebreaks around the burn or having sufficient people to assist.

Not only did firefighters have to attend on the day the fire started they also spent considerable time on the fire ground later in the month when the fire got going again.

Significant resources were used, time and money spent, several thousand dollars spent by owner, neighbours and Shire to eventually extinguish an escaped fire which need not have happened had the landowner been more responsible.

It is not intended to make things harder or to generate more work for parties involved by introducing 'year round' permits for the burning of standing bush; it is intended to make things safer for the whole community.

Permits will provide FCOs the authority to ensure burns are conducted in a safe manner, make the property owner more responsible for their actions and enable the Shire to recover the costs of firefighting in the event of escape, the same controls etc. as with the current permit system. See Section 28 – *Bush Fires Act 1954*

The term 'bush' is defined to include "trees, bushes, plants, scrub, and undergrowth of all kind whatsoever whether alive or dead".

The below recommendation, if adopted by BFAC and Council, will mean that; a permit will be required to burn; trees, bushes, plants, scrub and undergrowth of all kind whatsoever, whether alive or dead, for any time outside of the Prohibited Burning Time i.e. from 1st March to 15th December.

This applies to any area of Standing Bush.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

ITEM 8.1

That the Committee recommends to Council that;

1. In order for any occupier or owner of land to burn any area of Standing Bush a Permit to Burn is required.

2. The Restricted Burning Time to burn Standing Bush will be from 1st March to 15th December, all dates inclusive, in any year.
3. The Restricted Burning Time to burn Standing Bush is implemented with the 2017/18 Fire Regulation Notice.
4. A media campaign be conducted advising of the change.

AMENDED MOTION & COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

ITEM 8.1

Moved: Adrian Kranendonk

Seconded: Alex Williams

That the Committee recommends to Council that;

1. In order for any private occupier or owner of land to burn **any** area of Standing Bush a Permit to Burn is required from the 1 September to the 30 April except the prohibited season when permits will not be issued to private persons.
2. The Restricted Burning Time to burn Standing Bush is implemented with the 2017/18 Fire Regulation Notice.
3. A media campaign be conducted advising of the change.

Carried: 16/3 Joe Baker left the room

Reason for amended motion:

The BFAC members came to the consensus that based on past experience the problem months for escaped and/or reignited and then escaped private property burns were September, October and November and that late autumn and winter burns were less of a problem.

Members were also of the opinion that having permits year-round would impede opportunistic burning of standing bush in winter.

8.2 Fire Regulation Notice (FRN) Review

At the BFAC meeting held 3rd November 2016 following discussion on the draft regulations, FCOs were asked to provide feedback to the CESM by the 20th December. Two submissions were received;

1. Alex Williams – with regard to boundary access & construction and separation of contiguous bush on neighbouring properties.
2. Murray Anning, Silvicultural Manager WA. – Plantation companies happy that the Shire is adopting the Guidelines for Plantations Fire Protection.

The review committee met in January to discuss the submissions and comments made at the November BFAC.

A second draft has been distributed.

As the Chief put forward to the committee (March 2016 BFAC) the aims of the review were to simplify and reduce the size of the document and to produce a document that contains the relevant information that everyone requires with links to the Shire website for the more concise and specific information.

The document that has been produced meets that brief;

- Page 1 & 2 are the pages that will be printed and distributed with the rates notice.
- Pages 3, 4, 5 & 6 will be on the website. The whole document will be available on the website and can be printed by individuals or on request.

- Pages 7, 8 & 9 (variation request form) will also be on the website, print/download.

Low Fuel Boundary Access as opposed to Boundary Firebreaks has been introduced as a way to create a 'separation' between properties, specifically through bush and also to compartmentalise areas of contiguous bush.

A staged approach (mechanics yet to be determined) will be taken to bring Low Fuel Boundary Access into play with the Urban Fire Management Plan (UFMP) and the Variation to Fire Regulation Notice Form giving landholders the flexibility for alteration/compromise.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

ITEM 8.2

That the Committee recommends to Council that they;

1. Endorse the new format/layout of the Fire Regulation Notice;
 - Page 1 & 2 are the pages that will be printed and distributed with the rates notice.
 - Pages 3, 4, 5 & 6 will be on the website. The whole document will be available on the website and can be printed by individuals or on request.
 - Pages 7, 8 & 9 (variation request form) will also be on the website, print/download.
2. Endorse the fundamental changes of the Fire Regulation Notice;
 - Compartmentalising of contiguous bush greater than 40Ha,
 - Introduction of Low Fuel Boundary Access in a staged approach,
 - Introduction of Permits to Burn Standing Bush outside the Prohibited Burning Time.

AMENDED MOTION & COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

ITEM 8.2

Moved: Alex Williams

Seconded: Roger Seeney

That the Committee recommends to Council that they;

1. Endorse the new format/layout of the Fire Regulation Notice;
 - Page 1, 2 & 3 are the pages that will be printed and distributed with the rates notice.
 - Pages 3, 4, 5 & 6 will be on the website. The whole document will be available on the website and can be printed by individuals or on request.
 - Pages 7, 8 & 9 (variation request form) will also be on the website to print/download.
2. Endorse the fundamental changes of the Fire Regulation Notice;
 - Introduction of Low Fuel Boundary Access in a staged approach,
 - Introduction of Permits to Burn Standing Bush between 1st September to 30th April, except the prohibited season.
 - Variation forms being potentially accepted for 40 hectare compartmentalisation under Regulation 4.
 - Removal of bare earth breaks in regulation 5 and its substitution with a requirement for a low fuel zone that is maintained throughout the fire season.

Carried: Unanimous

Reasons for amended motion:

- 1) To reflect the standing bush permit season as per resolution 8.1

- 2) To allow for variations to be considered in regards to the 40 hectare compartmentalisation under Regulation 4.
- 3) The members of the Committee felt that the bare earth requirement in Regulation 5 was onerous and that the use of a low fuel zone was more appropriate.

8.3 Status of the Kordadup & Owingup Fire Brigades

Bruce Pringle raised the need for the listing/ status of the Kordadup & Owingup Bush Fire Brigades because from their perspective they are separate brigades.

Committee Service Outcome:

CESM to clarify the status of the Kordadup & Owingup Fire Brigades from a Shire and DFES perspective and to confirm this in writing to both brigades.

9. NEXT MEETING

It is recommended that the next meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee be held on Thursday 8th June 2017 at the Shire of Denmark Reception Room that will commence at the completion of the AGM.

10. CLOSURE OF MEETING – (Expected closure 8:30pm)

There being no further business to discuss the Presiding Person closed the meeting at 9.13pm.

The Chief Executive Officer recommends the endorsement of these minutes at the next meeting.

Signed: 

Bill Parker – Chief Executive Officer

Date: 3 March 2017

These minutes were confirmed at the meeting of the 8th June 2017

Signed: 

(Presiding Person at the meeting at which the minutes were confirmed.)