

Shire of Denmark Minutes



BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO BE HELD IN COUNCILS RECEPTION ROOM
953 SOUTH COAST HIGHWAY, DENMARK
THURSDAY 5th MARCH 2020, COMMENCING AT 6.30PM

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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"/>	Cr Mark Allen	Council Delegate / Chairman
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cr Roger Seenev	Council Delegate / Somerset Hill Proxy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Lez Baines	C.B.F.C. O
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Bryce Edwards	D.C.B.F.C.O
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Craig Lilley	Kordabup FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Nigel Marsh	Mt Lindesay Proxy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Marcus Owen	Ocean Beach FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Ivars Sulcs	Peaceful Bay FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Patrick Mcconingly	East Denmark FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Kevin Hard	Parryville FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Carl Wesley	Mt Shadforth FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Adrian Kranendonk	Fire Weather Officer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Craig Hughes	Carmarthen FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Brian Vigus	Tingledale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Sid Marshall	Scotsdale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Paul Harbron	Denmark VFRS/Town FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Mike Hills	Harewood FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Simon Coppock	William Bay FCO

MEMBERS:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Tristan Farmer	(Non-Voting)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms Nikki Rouse	DBCA Fire Operations Officer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Paul Ashton	DBCA Regional Fire Coordinator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Wes Baylie	Australian Bluegum Plantations Area Officer Department of Fire and Emergency Services

STAFF:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mrs Angela Simpson	(Non-Voting)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Scott Medhurst	Manager of Community Services Community Emergency Services Manager

VISITORS:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Bart Lebbing	Denmark Environment Centre
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APOLOGIES:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms Emma Holliday	Administration Officer Community Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Lee Shelley	VFRS Captain/FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Callum Baxter	Somerset Hill FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Murray Brooker	Mt Lindesay FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Alex Williams	Hazelvale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms Melanie Haymont	Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mrs Charmaine Shelley	Senior Ranger

ABSENT:

	Mr Kevin Hard	Parryville FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Neville Brass	Nornalup FCO

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Nil

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PERSON PRESIDING

Cr Allen welcomed guests and new faces to the meeting and spoke about the current climatic conditions within the Shire, stating that the risk had not yet passed. He then spoke about the achievements of the Bushfire Ready program in Denmark and how the good work needed to continue so as to not allow apathy to creep into our community. Cr Allen provided an update on the “Prescribed Burning” forum that was held in Denmark and noted that we have a passionate community, interested in the space we work in, who are able to hold serious discussions thus putting Denmark at the forefront of community engagement.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1 Committee Meeting Minutes

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION	ITEM 4.1
Moved: Lez Baines	Seconded: Carl Wesley
That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on the 12 TH December 2019, be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.	
Unanimously	

5. OFFICER REPORTS

5.1 Department of Fire and Emergency Services

Nil

5.2 Department of Biodiversity Conservation & Attractions

Ms Nikki Rouse provided the following report to the Committee.

ATTACHED

Mr Brian Vigus and Mr Bryce Edwards raised questions associated with specific parts of the the DBCA program and if parts of land were included. These questions were answered by DBCA who advised they had met with the relevant landholders to ensure satisfactory outcomes.

5.3 Australian Bluegum Plantations

Mr Paul Ashton advised there was no new information to report.

Mr Bryce Edwards raised a question about how bluegum harvesting trash was managed on plantations. Mr Paul Ashton provided a detailed description on these operations and the responsibilities surrounding them.

5.4 Chief Bushfire Control Officer

Mr Lez Baines submitted the following report:

Thank you to all Brigade members who have assisted in “away” deployments to assist other areas in need. Not many incidents since the last BFAC:

- 1 Justifiable false alarm, Mt Lindsay.
- 1 Slightly suspicious fire extinguished by the land owner, Hazelvale.
- 1 Illegal burning of rubbish in 2 oil drums, Carmarthen.
- Hastings Road Bush Fire, Kordabup.

The Hastings Road fire was acted on very quickly and very professionally. Fire 2 immediately requested extra appliances, water bombers and a dozer. We were very fortunate that Nigel Palmers dozer was actually constructing a dam on the same property and also that the water bombers were available and that they arrived 20 minutes after the request was made.

Brigade attendance was also very rapid and a major incident was avoided because of the fast response time. All crew arrived on scene with full PPE. The cause was an improperly extinguished cooking fire which the land owner informed me was his fault, he was anxious to know whether any crew had been injured whilst dealing with the fire (no injuries) and also asked me to forward his thanks onto our volunteers. He apologised profusely. Because the land owner admitted fault this fire was deemed accidental.

It is important that as FCO's you are ensuring that your members do not self-deploy to an incident without contacting the Chief, Deputy, CESM or relevant incident controller. When an incident or several incidents occur within the region, we have a responsibility to ensure coverage is maintained within the Shire. This has been made evident of the days we have multiple incidents going at the same time.

The Prohibited Burning Period has been extended to the 14th of March at this stage. This occurred after consultation with several FCO's across the Shire, Fire 2, CESM and DBCA. There is the possibility of a further extension or restricting the issuing of Permits if it is not extended

Members of the committee noted there concerns surrounding the extension of the Prohibited burning period and the effect it will have on fuel loads within the Shire the CBFCO stated he will continue to consult with FCOs and other Stakeholders to get the balance right.

5.5 Community Emergency Services Manager

Mr Scott Medhurst to provide the following report to the committee

Prevention;

- Lots happening in this space with various programs such as MAF, UCL/UMR Works and Local Fire Management programs.
- It was raised last meeting about fuel loadings on Mt Shadforth and at The Airport. There are several issues that limit the Shires ability to manage fuel loads in these locations which solutions are being sought for.
- If you identify target areas for mitigation works on land other than private land within the Shire please get in touch with the BRPC or myself so we can include them in our scope of works. There is expected to be external funding opportunities for 3-5 years for these works.
- Investigations into roadside mitigation and how that can be managed are continuing, there are a lot of identified policy and environment issues that will require significant work to find a solution.

Community Engagement;

- Sadly, we are losing Charlotte Powis out of the DFES Office she has been instrumental in assisting the Shire with Community Engagement activities within the Shire and the Great Southern as a whole. Charlotte has been an absolute asset and it's a great shame for us that she is headed off to the South West. I would like to personally acknowledge her commitment to the Shire of Denmark within the minutes. DFES are recruiting for the position which is advertised on the government jobs board should you know anyone interested.
- Carl and the team are doing wonderful stuff with Bushfire ready and its growing at a pace that is hard to contain. We are trying to support this as best as possible and source funding opportunities to help the program better. We would like to see some more Bushfire Ready Facilitators within the area so if you think you know of someone that would be interested in this please make them known to us.

Preparedness

- Vehicle Servicing should be complete. The depot had worked very hard to complete these works and develop new processes to ensure that they continue into the future. Please do not attend the depot without making contact with them prior as often parts etc will need to be ordered etc and issues can not be fixed on the spot. There has been incidents of members arguing about issues with the Depot staff and this practice must stop as it is simply unacceptable.
- Attempting to source grant funding to install some new water tanks around the shire with access to ground pumps and draughting sources if successful the intent would be to have them in strategic locations around the Shire beyond our current capacity.
- As we move away from our traditional fire season remember it is important to keep our skills fresh and training up to date.

Training

- New Training Programs and Modules are out, Pathways have gone so people automatically move onto the next program once they have completed the relevant module. As a result a lot of pre reqs have been changed around.
- eAcademy 2.0 is live, it is proving to be much more useful. I will be running a session for brigade leaders and training officers in the near future as a basic overview as to how it all works.
- The new standard for new volunteers to be active fire fighters is completion of AIIMS Awareness, Bushfire Safety Awareness and Bushfire Fighting Skills.

PPC/PPE

- Please remember to wear all PPC appropriately it's not going to protect you if it's not worn properly and may have implications for you if you get hurt.
- Cotton T-Shirts are now available to Active members in the first instance, once members who regularly avail themselves are kitted out we can continue to roll them out to others.
- Have ordered 6 new uniforms for members across the Shire, these are to assess if they are suitable locally they are expected to be delivered in about 2-3weeks and you will see them out and about. Those that are testing them are expected to provide feedback on them and I encourage others to try them on if they see them to see what they are like.
- Please make sure all uniform orders are submitted on the appropriate form unfortunately phone calls and emails are hard to manage without a form to back them up. Currently the form is completed by me on receipt of an email or phone call which is not a suitable long-term solution. If you have issues with printing/scanning and emailing please let me know and I will print you off a quantity of forms.

Response

- Local incidents have been very well and promptly attended. Thanks to all members that have given up time to do so. Whilst it is great to see everyone wanting to help out remember that we have a responsibility to provide response to the whole of the Shire and sometimes that means we need to leave appliances in situ and members on standby.
- Intra/Interstate deployments are becoming more frequent. Thank you to all members that have committed to sometimes week long deployment, not only have you given a lot of your time, so have your family and employers and it should be commended.
- Heightened state of readiness and pre deployments are becoming the norm with the climatic conditions we are living with. Whilst these deployments and preparedness actions can cause an inconvenience and often not eventuate into anything serious it makes planning for the support of large incidents much easier so thank you to members that have availed themselves for these.

Other

- LGGS Applications have to be submitted by the end of this month. The offers are largely acceptable in line with previous years spending for operational grants. It is likely these will be accepted once final calculations are completed. Capital Grants are being applied for to fund works, repairs and New appliances. (Replacement Light tankers for Peaceful Bay and Scotsdale/Shadforth and a new 4.4 Appliance for William Bay are scheduled for the next financial year) With an additional application being submitted to obtain a 12.2

Bulk Water Tanker. The application for a replacement Fire Shed for Carmarthen will be in the next round of grant funding if a suitable site can be identified.

- It is the season for AGM's please invite me to your AGM's and I will make every effort to attend where possible.
- Permit Changes for 2020 and beyond – I was hoping to have them available for this meeting but sadly that has not happened. However New permit books are currently being printed and I will be in contact with you all shortly to issue you with new ones. There are a couple of changes within the books which are;
 - Requirement of Signature by Permit Holder, This will mean permits you issue must be signed by the permit holder and carbon copied in your book. Permits will not be valid without the signature of the holder. The main reason for this is to stop people saying they were not aware of the conditions and to give us a strong base should legal action need to be taken which in turn protects you as FCOs and Volunteers.
 - Burn Notification, The DFES comcen must be notified of burns this is now conditioned similar to DBCA and FCO notifications. FCO's will be able to exercise discretion on this condition for incinerators and fire pits etc however I would recommend that it just remains a condition on all permits as it allows an online database of visibility for us all.

A discussion was held by the committee regarding the concerns and benefits of having permit holders, signing permits. It was resolved that this is the way forward and with the support of the CBFCO and DCBFCO would be a requirement into the future. It was also discussed if the CESM and Rangers are able to issue permits if FCOs are not available. Members were advised that the CESM and Rangers were able to issue permits as a last resort and if an FCO is not available for their specific area and its surrounds. Mr Scott Medhurst advised that FCO's were able to support each other by issuing permits if an area FCO is away.

Mr Craig Hughes raised questions around training requirements and how that will effect older members – Mr Scott Medhurst advised that it was the same process that is currently in place, new members will be required to align with the new qualifications and older members will need to make efforts were practical to do the same (where current competencies are not aligned to the new modules)

5.6 Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator

Nil

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES.

6.1 Biodiversity Act Changes

Mr Scott Medhurst reported that the Shire of Denmark had received advice from DFES that we are to continue to conduct business as usual until further advice has been received from DBCA. The use of the HRB on Private Property form should be used for all brigade burning on private property and the responsibility to identify DRF is bound by the property owner and this question should be asked of them.

Mr Mike Hills requested that a copy of that advice was made available to all FCOs

Action: CESM to circulate official advice from DFES to all FCO's

6.2 Fire Management Notice Review

Mr Scott Medhurst reported that a draft Terms of Reference had been created and would be circulated to members of the review group as previously identified with a view of meeting and having some information available at the next BFAC Meeting.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

7.1 Fuel Load Surrounding Communications Tower Mount Shadforth / Denmark Airport

Mr Kranendonk raised his concerns regarding the Communications Tower and Airport. These concerns are largely shared by the committee and the following motion was presented.

Motion: Alex Kranendonk

Seconded: Mike Hills

That the Shire of Denmark contact and the owner of Assessment Number A5827 in relation to reducing fuel loadings on that property in order to provide protection from Bushfire to the communications tower and associated assets located there.

Unanimous

Actioning Officer: Mr Scott Medhurst

7.2 Thankyou letter to Charlotte Powis

Motion: Roger Seeney

Seconded: Bryce Edwards

That the Shire of Denmark and BFAC send a letter to Ms Charlotte Powis acknowledging the hard work and commitment she displayed whilst working within the Shire of Denmark.

Unanimous

Actioning Officer: Mr Scott Medhurst

7.3 Thankyou letter to DBCA

Motion: Alex Kranendonk

Seconded: Brian Vigus

That the Shire of Denmark and BFAC send a letter of appreciation or thankyou to DBCA Frankland acknowledging their successful 2019 burning program within Denmark and Surrounds.

Unanimous

Mr Scott Medhurst advised the committee that a letter is sent every year by the CESM endorsing and supporting the burning program. The committee decided that they would like an additional letter sent this year that specifically acknowledges the work completed in the 2019 / 2020 period.

Actioning Officer: Mr Scott Medhurst

7.4 Fuel Loadings on Driveways and Shire Roads.

Mr Marcus Owen reported concerns about fuel loadings on private property driveways and also some Shire roads. Marcus reported issues with access when driving his truck during the course of his daily business. Mr Scott Medhurst advised that driveways are inspected as a part of Fire Compliance by the Shire. Driveways had to comply with the prescribed standard identified within the Fire Management Notice, if property owners were non-compliant they could be infringed. These inspections take place annually and there is a period of time given to owners to comply. In regard to Shire roads, Mr Owen was encouraged to make these roads known to the Shire by submitting an Engineering Service Request by contacting the Shire.

8. NEXT MEETING

It is recommended that the next meeting and the Annual General Meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee be held on Thursday, 11th June 2020 at the Shire of Denmark Reception Room that will commence at 6.00pm

9. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business to discuss the Presiding Person closed the meeting at 10:40pm