

Shire of Denmark

Minutes



BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO BE HELD IN COUNCILS RECEPTION ROOM
953 SOUTH COAST HIGHWAY, DENMARK
THURSDAY 23th JULY 2020, COMMENCING AT 6.30PM

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1. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

The Presiding Person opened the meeting at 6:32 pm.

2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

<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"/>	Cr Mark Allen	Council Delegate / Chairman
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cr Roger Seeney	Council Delegate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Mike Hills	Harewood FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Craig Lilley	Kordabup FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Murray Brooker	Mt Lindesay FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Hank Alberts	Ocean Beach FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vacant	Peaceful Bay FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Sid Marshall	Scotsdale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Alex Williams	Hazelvale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Brian Vigus	Tingledale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Lee Shelley	VFRS Captain
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Adrian Kranendonk	Fire Weather Officer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Neville Brass	Nornalup FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Simon Coppock	William Bay FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Craig Hughes	Carmarthen FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Carl Wesley	Mt Shadforth FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Paul Moncrieff	Mehniup FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr William Miller	East Denmark FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Marcus Owen	Ocean Beach FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Patrick McConigley	East Denmark FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Nigel Marsh	Mt Lindsay
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Paul Harbron	Denmark VFRS

MEMBERS:

(Non-Voting)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Wes Bailye	DFES Area Officer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Paul Ashton	Australian Bluegum Plantations

STAFF:

(Non-Voting)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms Angela Simpson	Executive Manager of Community Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mrs Charmaine Shelley	Senior Ranger
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms Melanie Haymont	Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator

VISITORS:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr William Miller	East Denmark FCO Nomination
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Paul Moncrieff	Mehniup FCO Nomination
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Hank Alberts	Ocean Beach FCO Nomination
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Richard Stanley	Somerset FCO Nomination
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms Jenna Honey-Smith	DFES

APOLOGIES:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Scott Medhurst	Community Emergency Services Manager
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Callum Baxter	Somerset Hill FCO

ABSENT:

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Nil

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PERSON PRESIDING

Nil

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**4.1 Committee Meeting Minutes**

Mr Marcus Owen noted that Point 7.4 should have read "Access to driveways and Shire Roads", not "Fuel Loading"

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION	ITEM 4.1
Moved: Patrick McConigley	Seconded: Bryce Edwards
That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on the 5 TH March 2020, be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.	
Carried: Unanimously	

5. OFFICER REPORTS**5.1 Department of Fire and Emergency Services**

Mr Wes Bailye reported the following:

- New vehicle identifier stickers will soon be available through the local government for all vehicles.
- Fleet: New 4 x 4 coming out at the end of month, identified issue with contacts and relays melting, brigades to push back to fleet if any issues experienced.

Jenna Honey-Smith was welcomed to the DFES team, Jenna is leading with the Burn Smart Program in the Shire of Denmark.

5.2 Department of Biodiversity Conservation & Attractions

Nil

5.3 Australian Bluegum Plantations

Mr Paul Ashton reported that:

ABP is reasonably quiet at the moment but expected to pick up later in the year.

5.4 Chief Bushfire Control Officer

Mr Lez Baines submitted the following report to the committee:

Thank you to all Brigades and their members who have turned out for several calls since the last BEFAC meeting.

- We received five relatively minor calls from ComCen where we turned out to incidents but nothing major regarding Bush Fires.
- We also assisted VFRS with a structural fire on Scotsdale Road.

ComCen Call-Out System

The ComCen sms call out system is working really well with the Brigades who are using this and I would encourage all Brigades to seriously consider being part of this system. When the

responding crew leader is turning out they MUST contact ComCen by phone call to confirm they are turning out. The phone number is on the sms that you will receive, ComCen CANNOT RECEIVE A REPLY SMS.

If the messaged Brigade does not advise ComCen then I receive a call stating that they have not responded which could waste valuable time in turning out to an incident.

BRIGADES, PLEASE DO NOT DEPLOY TO AN INCIDENT WITHOUT CLEARANCE FROM THE CHIEF, DEPUTY OR CESM UNLESS YOU RECEIVE THE SMS FROM ComCen.

- Regarding training burns on private property please do not proceed without the proper prescription being signed off on. This includes Brigade members as well.
- NO appliance can be used by a Brigade member for a personal burn without Shire authorisation.

5.5 Community Emergency Services Manager

Mr Scott Medhurst submitted the following report to the committee:

Prevention:

- Successful Mitigation Programs under taken this year including various treatments across the Shire. This is as a result of Shire Funding, Mitigation Activities Fund and DFES UCL/UMR Budget
- Working closely with Rangers to ensure compliance across all Critical Infrastructure. Has been quite a hard task tracking down relevant departments to ensure works are completed but is now progressing as appropriate.
- 37 MAF Treatments approved by DFES for 2020/2021 with a budget of 500k to achieve them. These are in addition to works carried out with the Shire Budget and DFES UCL/UMR

Community Engagement:

- DFES Burn Smart program to support the Private Property owners with Planned Burning has been rolled out. DFES Staff working with BFR and others to roll this program out and do some private property Planned Burning in Denmark.
- Highlights the importance of Community engagement being a position recognised within the brigade to work with BFR Facilitators, Burn Smart and other Community Based initiatives.
- Jenna Honey-Smith is the new Community Preparedness Advisor in the Albany office and has hit the ground running with the Burn Smart campaign she will be in contact with you as time progresses or through BFR Facilitators as appropriate.

Preparedness

- The team at the depot have commenced servicing the Fire fleet early this year to ensure all vehicles can have the attention they deserve and issues have time to be rectified before summer. Please ensure that all faults a listed in your fault books or an easy to find location for the depot (you can also email them through if you would prefer)
- AVL Testing is still required, please attempt to have them all completed by this month as it gives us an opportunity to have them repaired if required before the Bush Fire Season.
- With the cooler months here BFB's may be required to respond to structure fires in your areas. A great topic for training activities over winter.
- Overhead standpipe maintenance is still occurring with a view of replacing them with above ground hydrants that can be connected to by BIC, Camlock or Storz as appropriate. As these increase 5/10m Collector Lengths will be available for your appliances if you do not already have them.

- Vehicles for replacement this year – Peaceful Bay Light Tanker, Scotsdale/Shadforth Light Tanker and William Bay have opted to get a new Tatra 4.4B. Application was made for a 12.2 Bulk Water tanker to be supplied to Denmark through the LGGS however this was unsuccessful.
- PPE/PPC old stock will be phased out and the new lightweight tunics and trousers will be rolled out

Training

- Official training has been a bit hit and miss this year with ongoing COVID restrictions it is however back on with modified restrictions. It was really good to see brigades undertaking their own training programs as restrictions eased.
- Please remember that we share the training load with Albany and Mt Barker and encourage members to apply for courses in those locations. Out of region courses need to come to me before approval by DFES.
- Pre season refreshers, I would encourage brigades to undertake basic preseason skills refreshers. I do have a document to assist with core skills should you need something please get in contact with me.
- Volunteer Hub and E-academy continue to present issues and I will happily assist where possible with these issues. I have been assured that the Hub team are working to fix sign in issues as quick as possible. All volunteers are encouraged to access the Hub and E-academy to assist in their access to information and training.

Upcoming Courses

- On Road Driving – Albany 1/08/2020
- Bush Fire Firefighting – Katanning 11-12/08/2020
- Introduction to Structural FF – Cranbrook 12/08/2020
- Plantation Firefighting – Mt Barker 15/08/2020
- Sector Commander – Denmark 29-30/08/2020
- Machine Supervision – Mt Barker 13/09/2020
- Machine Supervision – Denmark 4/10/2020

Response

- Several incidents have been attended to by brigades from escaped burns to vehicle/structural fires. Those incidents have been well attended even with COVID restrictions and increased hygiene measures. Thankyou to everyone that has attended and the families behind those that support people being able to turn out.
- Denmark Police would like all members to take care when attending the fire sheds or incidents in private vehicles, remember to drive safely and leave your vehicles locked and parked in safe locations where possible.

5.6 Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator

Ms Melanie Haymont submitted the following report to the committee:

Mitigation Activities Fund

First round of Mitigation activities fund works has been completed; works were carried out across the Shire totalling \$222K Including:

- Track upgrades
- Culvert installation/Drainage works
- Mulching
- Slashing

Community response to these works were on the whole very positive with residents providing contractors good feedback out in the field. An application to the Mitigation activities fund was submitted for further works in the 20/21 financial year.

This application consisted of 137 separate Bushfire mitigation activities totalling \$1.3M.

\$1.25M of this application was deemed eligible unfortunately this year's fund was oversubscribed and we were asked to cut our application down to \$500K. This assessment was carried out internally based on risk, economic benefits, complexity of the mitigation works and social considerations. The program was reduced to 37 separate treatments. We will have the ability to carry our further works if the proposed works program comes in under budget.

This program will deliver mitigation works some of our road verges, based on evacuation routes identified out of the Bushfire resilience Study into Weedon Hill, Ocean Beach and Peaceful Bay.

Replacement of the bridge on the Western portion of the Rail trail to allow for access from Ocean beach road through to Wentworth Rd.

Upgrades to some strategic access across the Shire, including works on the Eastern portion of the rail trail to South Coast Hwy.

These works will be presented to the Mitigation working group in September, and put out for tender soon after.

Bushfire Resilience in the Great Southern (BRIGS)

All reports have now been delivered in draft form from this project. The assessments were carried out over eight precincts across Plantagenet, Albany and Denmark.

A major part of the program was to carry out community consultation regarding the outcomes and the associated works program. The aim of this consultation process is to help residents understand the risk they are exposed to and the appropriate treatment methods for the level of risk.

This was scheduled to be carried out in March but was delayed due to COVID restrictions. With the easing of restrictions, the meetings have been rescheduled for:

Weedon Hill 11th August 6.00pm Shire Reception room

Ocean Beach 13th August 5:30pm Shire Reception Room

Peaceful Bay 25th August 5:30pm Peaceful Bay Progress association Hall

You are all welcome to attend these sessions (contact Mel for further information)

Fire wise garden (Plane tree precinct)

This project is part the community resilience building program funded through the Natural Disaster resilience fund. The launch/completion of this garden has also been delayed due to COVID restrictions.

We are aiming to deliver this project by the end of September. Once finished this garden will showcase fire wise gardening techniques to residents and visitors. This will also provide a space for our bushfire ready Facilitators and street coordinators to carry out gatherings /workshops to demonstrate to people the principals of Fire wise gardening.

Bushfire Risk Planning program

The new financial year brings a new contract for the Shire of Denmark and the Bushfire Risk Planning Program.

My contact hours with the Shire of Denmark have now been reduced to two days a fortnight this will continue until June 2022. With this reduced time, I will be focusing on embedding the program across the various directorates within the Shire of Denmark. Scott will be managing the Bushfire mitigation program for now on.

I would like to thank you all for your support of my role in the Shire and the program in general. I look forward to seeing more of the same good work and professionalism into the future. You are all doing an incredible job in protecting our community in sometimes trying situations.

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

6.1 Fuel Load Surrounding Communications Tower Mount Shadforth/Airport

Communications Infrastructure – Mohr Drive. The responsible party was identified and requests made to comply with the Fire Management Notice, install adequate access to site and reinstate an adequate asset protection zone, to date this has not occurred. Rangers are following the compliance and enforcement process and the responsible party has been given final notice to comply.

ACTION: Officers to investigate if there is any legislation available to them to use to pursue the protection of critical emergency service infrastructure outside of the fire season. If no legislation available, then to pursue other means to work with the land manager to achieve a positive outcome for asset protection.

Denmark Airport – East River Road. This area has identified flora and fauna areas within it. An application to conduct environment assessments and mechanical works to support burning was made through the Mitigation Activities Fund, unfortunately due to applications to the Mitigation Activities Fund being highly competitive this year funding was unsuccessful. This means we will need to look at alternatives to make that happen but it is included in the Bushfire Risk Management Plan as an Extreme Risk.

6.2 Fire Management Notice Review

Due to COVID Restrictions the group has not yet met, Terms of Reference were created and information has been circulated by email and feedback received. Based on feedback there has been some minor changes made to the notice and booklet. The main change being removal of the FCO contacts from the booklet and attached to the notice. This allows the booklet to be reused yearly without the need to continually reprint it. As the booklet is the highest cost of the FMN this makes sense from a financial perspective and allows people to have an easy to read contact list separate to the book. It is the intention that this years FMN and Booklet will remain relatively unchanged.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

Committee requesting feedback from Shire Officers on any challenges of delivering on the new policy to collect limbs from falling trees and have council remove them from the road reserve,

Request that Fire Management Notice planning and development occurs earlier in the year so more considered input from members. Ms Mel Haymont advised that she can provide examples of BFN from other LGAs.

Mr Les Baines to check what discussions occurred regarding the decision not to prosecute the individual involved in the illegal fire resulting in the bushfire earlier in the year.

Mr Marcus Owen presented a motion as a result of his concern that FCOs were being asked to get signatures on fire permits and that this action had occurred without consultation with the FCOs:

Motion: FCOs must be consulted on any issues affecting them in their duties either directly or indirectly.

MOVED Mr Marcus Owen
CARRIED Against 2 For 18

SECONDED Mr Murray Brooker

Mr Sid Marshall commented that he believed that timber bridges in the Shire were in a poor state of repair and maintenance and were a fire risk.

ACTION: Officers advised that they will provide a report on bridges and how they are maintained at the next meeting

Mr Murray Brooker requested that a review of BFAC Terms of Reference and Charter are undertaken at least once a year.

Mr Alex Williams provided advanced notice that the western zone FCOs will be submitting item to the next BFAC with respect to fire periods. In summary the item will be requesting that the fire regulations for the Shire of Denmark are varied to provide for an east west split of the Shire with different prohibited and restricted burning periods. The purpose of this variation is to facilitate mitigation burns in the Tingle Forest region of the Shire with its longer drying out period. We will be asking that BFAC support an investigation into the viability of his variation. We will be seeking the support of the CBFAC and the CESM to assist investigating the feasibility of such a variation including the provision of statistical data on escaped burns across the Shire. We will be seeking the support of DFES and DPAW to provide soil moisture and other data that they used to establish the viability of their scheduled mitigation burning program.

Mr Bryce Edwards requested more information on the Burn Smart program from Ms Jenna Honey Smith. Jenna provided a summary of the program and the resources that are available for brigades to access and share with the community.

Cr Roger Seeney acknowledge that the permit issues could have been handled differently but outlined that there may be instances, especially in the current state of emergency, where getting input from the FCOs may be challenging if actions need to be taken at short notice.

Mr Lee Shelley thanked BFBs for their quick turn-out and support at structural fires in the last year.

8. NEXT MEETING

It is recommended that the next Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting be held on Thursday, 1st October 2020 at 6.00pm.

9. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business to discuss the Presiding Person closed the meeting at 7:42 pm