

**Minutes of Committee Meeting****Caroline's House, Banjup****14 April 2014 at 7:30 pm****Present:**

Jemma Van Dongen

Colin Bramwell

Ian Thurston

Caroline Rimmer

Brian Morton

Neil Raine

Sebastian Scata

Stephen Thornton

**Apologies**

Coco Franklin

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Confirmation of minutes of last meeting</b>	
1.1	The minutes of the meeting of 10 March 2014 were confirmed	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
2.1	<b>Verges</b> Stephen reported that he believed that the Main Roads Department was responsible for maintaining the verges in Banjup and that they were not inclined to do any more than absolutely necessary.  This was queried by the Committee as it was understood that under the Land Administration Act the City of Cockburn was responsible for Banjup's verges.	
2.2	<b>PA System</b> Caroline will seek second hand PA systems from her school contacts. Otherwise, a 2 speaker, 4 microphone new system will be sought in time for the next General Meeting.	Caroline
<b>3.</b>	<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	
3.1	Caroline reported that the BRG has \$3,277.89 cash in the bank. No petty cash is held separately.	
3.2	Invoices are awaited from Neil Williams for supplying printing and signage services.	

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4.	<b>Cockburn's Response to Banjup Needs After the Fire</b>	
4.1	The Committee expressed its disappointment with Cockburn's lack of support for Banjup residents affected by the February fire.	
4.2	Ian reported that all members had been sent an email describing Cockburn's response and asking if members would want to take advantage of any bulk purchases that the BRG might be able to negotiate. Ian said that there was limited interest in any such arrangements.	
	The Committee resolved to email members one more time on the matter.	Ian
5.	<b>Cockburn's Biodiversity Grant Scheme</b>	
5.1	The Committee expressed its disappointment that Cockburn had declined to modify its Biodiversity Grant scheme to assist fire affected Banjup residents this winter.	
5.2	The Committee found it difficult to reconcile the assertion by Cockburn's Environment Manager, Chris Beaton, that this year's \$40,000 budget had already been allocated to 20 scheme applicants, most from Banjup, with the Mayor's disparaging comments at the AGM about Banjup's lack of take up of the grants.	
6.	<b>Cockburn's Progress With Keelty's Recommendations</b>	
6.1	The Committee reviewed Cockburn's statement about its progress in implementing the recommendations arising from the Keelty inquiry into the Hills Bushfire of 2011.	
6.2	The Committee was disappointed that Cockburn seemed to have made little progress. Many of its responses were prefaced by "reviewing" or "exploring" or "identifying". It was noted that no timelines or resources are mentioned. This creates doubt about Cockburn's commitment to implementing all of Keelty's recommendations this year.	
6.3	The Committee asked Colin and Ian to draft a position paper on the matter for its approval prior to discussion with Cockburn councillors.	Colin Ian

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7.	<b>Bush Fire Reference Group</b>	
7.1	The Committee again expressed its disappointment that Cockburn had rejected the BRG's application to join the Bush Fire Reference Group. It also noted that Cockburn had not replied directly to the BRG's letter of 30 October asking for representation and giving sound reasons.	
7.2	<p>The Committee noted that section 67 (1) of the Bush Fires Act authorises Cockburn to establish Advisory committees:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>A local government may at any time appoint such persons as it thinks fit as a bush fire advisory committee for the purpose of advising the local government regarding all matters relating to the preventing, controlling and extinguishing of bush fires, the planning of the layout of fire-breaks in the district...</i></p> <p>The Committee resolved to seek an explanation from Cockburn as to why "<i>it thinks fit</i>" to exclude Banjup residents from the Bush Fire Reference Group, especially as it advertises annually for public representation on other Reference Groups.</p>	Colin Ian
8.	<b>Change to Emergency Service Levy</b>	
8.1	Colin and Ian reported that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services had written to the City of Cockburn on 10 March proposing again that Banjup be rezoned from Emergency Service Level (ESL) 3 to ESL 1.	
8.2	The Committee noted that DFES had made a similar proposal in February 2012. This proposal was later withdrawn at the direction of the then Minister for Emergency Services, Troy Buswell.	
8.3	The Committee noted that the change to ESL 1 would cause in a doubling of Banjup's ESL charge on rates notices from about \$120 to \$250. Procedurally, in the event of a fire in Banjup, DFES' Success fire crews would be dispatched first, rather than the Jandakot Volunteer Brigade. Inevitably, this would degrade the level of service to Banjup residents because there are no hydrants in Banjup from which to draw water and the Volunteer Brigade's tankers would always be required.	
8.4	Ian reported that in mid March he had been informed by Joe Francis, Member for Jandakot and the Minister for Emergency Services, that he had instructed the proposal be withdrawn and not put forward again until reticulated water is available in Banjup.	

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8.5	The Committee noted that Cockburn Council at its 10 April meeting resolved to seek detailed justification for the proposed change from DFES. Further, this was carried by 6 votes to 3 in council, implying that some councillors decline to support Banjup.	
9.	<b>Cockburn's Proposed Fire Order and Fire Permit</b>	
9.1	At its meeting of 10 April, Cockburn council resolved to seek public comment on the Fire Control Order and Fire Permit proposed for 2014/15.	
9.2	The Committee reviewed the proposed fire order and expressed its concern that Cockburn once again was trying to impose a 5 metre clearance around every building on a Banjup property, including the residence.	
9.3	<p>It was unclear to the Committee how compliance with the proposed Fire Order would be assured. Would more Rangers be employed and would they be making appointments with property owners to inspect the clearances around buildings?</p> <p>Further, if owners' safety was the prime concern of Cockburn, then why does the proposed fire order not include keeping gutters clear?</p>	
9.4	The Committee noted that the proposed fire permit now requires at least 3 able bodied persons to be in attendance at a fire at all times. This is a requirement under the Bush Fire Act that Cockburn now relies upon in the exercise of its fire management responsibilities. This contrasts with last year's fire permit that required only 2 people be in attendance but that was because Cockburn's local laws gave that discretion. However, in August 2013 Cockburn deleted its local laws concerning fire matters and so this discretion is no longer available.	
9.5	The Committee noted that section 23F of the Bush Fires Act allows burning of garden refuse after 6:00 pm without a fire permit and with only 1 person in attendance. As most of Banjup residents' fires are pile burns rather than block burns, this could be the most expeditious method of having a lawful fire.	
9.6	However, the Committee also noted that section 23G of the Bush Fires Act would allow Cockburn to impose restrictions on burning garden refuse, such as having piles no larger than 1 sq metre.	
9.7	The Committee resolved to inform members about the proposed changes and to seek their feedback as to how to proceed.	Colin Ian

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10.	<b>Possible Fire Safety Regime</b>	
10.1	<p>The Committee reviewed a proposal by Colin and Ian of a scheme for hazard reduction burns that would maintain fuel loads at low levels on Banjup properties. It would involve the Volunteer Brigade burning a 50 metre deep strip across a property every 3 years.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to put this proposal to members at the next general meeting.</p>	Colin Ian
11.	<b>Bunnings Fund Raising</b>	
11.1	<p>The Committee again expressed its appreciation of Bunnings' offer to facilitate fund raising to assist recovery of fire damaged properties.</p>	
11.2	<p>However, in view of members' limited response to the offer of assistance, the Committee resolved to decline Bunnings' kind offer.</p>	
12.	<b>Footpaths</b>	
12.1	<p>Jemma reported that she and Coco had been advised by Cockburn that the best use of the footpath funds would be to build a path along Beenyup Road from Tapper to Gibbs. Jemma will seek a timetable for the work from Cockburn.</p>	Jemma
13.	<b>May General Meeting</b>	
13.1	<p>The Committee agreed to postpone the next general meeting until Sunday 18 May at 3:00 pm at the Banjup Hall.</p>	
14.	<b>Other Business</b>	
14.1	<p>None</p>	
15.	<b>Next Meeting</b>	
15.1	<p>Monday 12 May 2014 at 7:30 pm at Ian's house</p>	