



Minutes

Bush Fire Control Officers Committee Meeting Tuesday, 21 March 2023

Date	Wednesday 21 March 2023
Time	7:00pm
Location	Shire of Wickepin Council Chambers 77 Wogolin Road, Wickepin WA 6370
Distribution Date	Friday 24 March 2023



Endorsement Recommendation

The Chief Executive Officer recommends the endorsement of these minutes at the next Bush Fire Control Officers Committee Meeting.

Nathan Cain
Chief Executive Officer
Thursday 23 March 2023

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1 Declaration of Opening

The Chairperson declared the meeting open at 7:02pm.

2 Attendance

2.1 Present

Members

T Leeson	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
L Lansdell	Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer
R Butler	Fire Control Officer
T Heffernan	Fire Control Officer
D White	Fire Control Officer
G McDougall	Fire Control Officer
T Mullan	Fire Control Officer
T Russell	Fire Control Officer
C Sims	Fire Control Officer

Non-Members

N Cain	Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Wickpin
G Stevens	Area Narrogin Officer (East), Department of Fire and Emergency Services

3 Apologies and Leave of Absence

3.1 Apologies

P Russell	Fire Control Officer
J Hamilton	Fire Control Officer
W Astbury	Fire Control Officer
D Stacey	Fire Control Officer

3.2 Previously Approved Leave of Absence

Nil

3.3 Requests for Leave of Absence

Nil

4 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meetings

4.1 Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 13 September 2022

Committee Decision

Resolution 230321-BFCO-01

Moved G McDougall

Seconded R Butler

That the minutes of the Bush Fire Control Officers Committee Meeting held Tuesday 13 September 2022 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Carried 9/0

5 Business Arising from Minutes

5.1 Chief Executive Officer – Weather Control Officer

Committee reaffirmed the Chief Executive Officer as the Weather Control Officer.

Action

Chief Executive Officer to undertake necessary training to perform the function of the Weather Control Officer.

5.2 Australian Fire Danger Ratings System

Committee noted the need to hold training on the new Australian Fire Danger Ratings System.

Action

Chief Executive Officer to arrange training through Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

5.3 Sparks Road Spraying and Slashing

Committee noted the need to reduce the fuel loading in the road reserve of Sparks Road.

Action

Chief Executive Officer to arrange spraying, slashing and general fuel load reduction on Sparks Road.

5.4 Rural Fire Awareness Training

Committee noted the need to have multiple annual Rural Fire Awareness Training sessions.

Action

Chief Executive Officer to arrange training through Department of Fire and Emergency Services throughout the months of July through to, and including, October.

6 Committee Business

6.1 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer 2023-2024

T Leeson stood down from the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer role for the purpose of the election of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer position for 2023-2024.

The Chief Executive Officer assumed the Chairperson and called for nominations for the role of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.

R Butler nominated T Leeson to be the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer. T Leeson accepted.

No other nominations were received.

Committee Decision

Resolution 230321-BFCO-02
Moved G McDougall
Seconded R Butler

That Committee recommends to Council for T Leeson to be appointed as the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer for 2023-2024.

Carried 9/0

T Leeson assumed the Chair.

6.2 Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer 2023-2024

The Chairperson called for nominations for the role of Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer.

T Heffernan nominated L Lansdell to be the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer. L Lansdell accepted.

No other nominations were received.

Committee Decision

Resolution 230321-BFCO-03
Moved T Heffernan
Seconded T Leeson

That Committee recommends to Council for L Lansdell to be appointed as the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer for 2023-2024.

6.3 Fire Control Officers / Bush Fire Radio Operators / Fire Weather Instrument Officers 2023-2024

The Chairperson confirmed the intentions of the following persons to undertake the role of Fire Control Officer / Bush Fire Radio Operator / Fire Weather Officer for 2023-2024 –

- T Heffernan
- P Russell
- D White

- G McDougall
- W Astbury
- J Hamilton
- N Astbury
- T Leeson
- D Stacey
- R Butler
- L Lansdell
- T Mullan
- T Russell
- C Sims

Committee Decision

Resolution 230321-BFCO-04

Moved D White

Seconded T Mullan

That Committee recommends to Council for the following persons to be appointed as a Fire Control Officer / Bush Fire Radio Operator / Fire Weather Instrument Officer for 2023-2024 –

- T Heffernan
- P Russell
- D White
- G McDougall
- W Astbury
- J Hamilton
- N Astbury
- T Leeson
- D Stacey
- R Butler
- L Lansdell
- T Mullan
- T Russell
- C Sims

Carried 9/0

6.4 Clover Burning Permit Issuing Officer 2023-2024

The Chairperson requested, for succession planning purposes, more than one person be appointed to the Clover Burning Permit Issuing Officer role.

Committee Decision

Resolution 230321-BFCO-05

Moved L Lansdell

Seconded C Sims

That Committee recommends to Council for the following persons to be appointed as a Clover Burning Permit Issuing Officer for 2023-2024 –

- **W Astbury**
- **D White**

Carried 9/0

6.5 Dual Fire Control Officers from Wickepin for 2023-2024

The Chairperson confirmed the intentions of the following persons to undertake the role of Dual Fire Control Officer for 2023-2024 with each of the Shires as listed below –

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| • D Stacey and J Hamilton | Shire of Corrigin |
| • T Leeson, N Astbury and P Russell | Shire of Narrogin |
| • T Leeson, R Butler, and L Lansdell | Shire of Cuballing |
| • G McDougall and W Astbury | Shire of Dumbleyung |
| • N Astbury and D White | Shire of Wagin |
| • R Butler and J Hamilton | Shire of Pingelly |
| • W Astbury, D Stacey, T Heffernan, and T Mullan | Shire of Kulin |

Committee Decision

Resolution 230321-BFCO-06

Moved D White

Seconded T Russell

That Committee recommends to Council for the following persons to be appointed as Dual Fire Control Officers for 2023-2024 with each of the Shires as listed below –

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| • D Stacey and J Hamilton | Shire of Corrigin |
| • T Leeson, N Astbury and P Russell | Shire of Narrogin |
| • T Leeson, R Butler, and L Lansdell | Shire of Cuballing |
| • G McDougall and W Astbury | Shire of Dumbleyung |
| • N Astbury and D White | Shire of Wagin |
| • R Butler and J Hamilton | Shire of Pingelly |
| • W Astbury, D Stacey, T Heffernan, and T Mullan | Shire of Kulin |

Carried 9/0

6.6 Shire of Wickepin Fire Break Notice 2023-2024

The Chairperson confirmed the intention to adopt the wording from the previous year for the Fire Break Notice 2023-2024 with the only modification being to add the requirement for firefighting units to effectively be on-site for stubble crunching.

Committee Decision

Resolution 230321-BFCO-07

Moved T Heffernan

Seconded R Butler

That Committee recommends to Council for the following wording for the Shire of Wickepin Fire Break Notice 2023-2024 –

Bush Fires Act 1954
Shire of Wickepin
Annual Firebreak Notice 2023-2024

Action is required by owners and / or occupiers of all land in the Shire of Wickepin. Please read this notice carefully.

Any queries should be directed to the Shire of Wickepin Administration Centre or Local Shire of Wickepin Bush Fire Control Officer.

Pursuant to the powers contained in Section 33 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, owners and occupiers of property within the Shire of Wickepin are hereby required on or before 1 October 2023 and thereafter to 14 April 2024 to plough, scarify or otherwise provide and maintain firebreaks clear of all inflammable material at least 2.5 metres wide as follows –

Rural Land

Inside the boundary of all land held by each owner or occupier, firebreaks need not follow the perimeter of any paddock and will be acceptable following land contours in an endeavour to overcome water erosion –

- To subdivide each holding into lots of no greater than 400 hectares, and**
- To surround the homestead, outbuildings, and fuel storages on any such land.**

That, from the 15 October 2023 all harvesting, baling, and stubble crunching (including cutting and raking) operations, there shall be an operational mobile engine powered firefighting unit or units with a minimum combined capacity of 1,200 litres of available water, located in or immediately adjacent to the paddock being harvested and / or baled. The minimum capacity of any single firefighting unit shall be 600 litres of available water. The responsibility to supply and operate the firefighting unit is that of the landowner/occupier.

Townsite Land

All lots within the townsites of Harrismith, Tincurrin, Toolibin, Wickepin and Yealering are required to be cleared and maintained free of all debris or inflammable material. Failure to comply with these requirements renders the owner or occupier liable to a penalty of \$5,000.

Clearing of Fence Lines

When clearing for new fence lines adjoining road reserves, you must have written approval from the Shire of Wickepin prior to commencement of clearing works. Landholders are asked

to consider locating the fence three (3) metres inside their boundary to avoid any clearing on road reserves. Old fences should first be removed. If landholders wish to place their fence on the boundary, they may clear no more than one (1) metre beyond their boundary. This may be varied in special circumstances at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer. Any timber removed from the road reserve is to be pushed onto the owner's property.

Fencing of Road Reserves

Council encourages farmers to fence off road reserves running through their properties to protect trees on these reserves and to allow new growth of vegetation.

Burning on Roadsides

Should property owners wish to carry out burning of the road reserve adjacent to their property, it is necessary to obtain council approval prior to any burning taking place.

Burning Periods

Restricted Burning – 1 October 2023 to 13 November 2023

Prohibited Burning – 14 November 2023 to 7 February 2024

Restricted Burning – 8 February 2024 to 14 April 2024

Harvest and Fire Ban 2023-2024 Season

Harvesting is banned on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day.

Lighting of fires is banned on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Carried 9/0

7 General Business

7.1 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Report

Firstly, as I didn't do a CBFCO Report at our previous meeting I missed out on thanking Roger Butler for his great work as CBFCO for 4 years. A very belated thank you to Roger Butler.

Thanks to Ken Martin for his short stint as an FCO. We now welcome aboard Todd Mullan as Ken's replacement.

Thank you to all FCO's for volunteering your time, not just fighting fires but your assistance in harvest and movement of vehicle ban checks and doing the call ups when I'm away. Also, thanks to all FCO's and DBFCO for their support towards me as a first time CBFCO.

This season we had very few harvest and vehicle movement bans during the harvest period. I am very grateful for this, as we had to adopt a new fire behaviour index system with no training. Had it been a year with several boarder line harvest bans I feel it would have created a lot of controversy between FCO's and some farmers.

06/10/22. Ken, Luke, Tim, and I inspected WA Kaolin mine. We found they had more than adequate water supply. They had 1 permanent fire ute and a 6-wheeler tanker truck not registered though. Earthmoving equipment available if necessary. We advised that all staff to be registered as volunteers to be covered if they attend outside fires. They also had plenty of blackened area to load trucks during a harvest ban. We will maintain communication with Tony Irving especially if catastrophic conditions are forecast. We will continue to do annual inspections.

On that note we are due for another inspection, and I encourage all FCO's to do an inspection or a tour at some point so that we are all on the same page. Let me know if you are interested in the next inspection.

Noted Fires

16/11/22 Lightning strikes

Ben Mutton home farm, 5ha heavy barley crop.

Ben Mutton, Alan Hemley's farm, 5ha heavy barley crop. Due to the late finish to the season the barley was not 100% cured, which helped keep the area burnt minimal. Bushby Road, tree struck on road verge. Minimal area burnt.

29/11/22 Header collapsed bearing

Hills southeast Yealering 3ha barley stubble.

30/11/22 Lightning strike

Rowan Astbury, Harrismith Early morning strike 6.00am, 4ha burnt.

21/12/22 Header / Seed destructor

Clinton Hemely's, North Wickepin 5ha wheat stubble.

28/12/22 Header / chaff cart

Lindsay Ward North Tincurrin, minimal area burnt.

10/01/23 Lightning strike
Mark Fulford, 1ha and a hay bale.

22/01/22 Lightning strike
Ben Mutton, 2ha pasture.

A lot of lightning strikes this year. Good to see volunteers were vigilant during these thunderstorms resulting in quick response to fires and minimal area burnt.

All other fires were kept minimal thanks to farmers being well equipped with firefighting equipment in their paddock.

Overall, all fires were well attended. Thank you to all volunteers.

I would also like to thank Acting CEO Noel Mason for his persistent effort in obtaining another bushfire radio (base station). A very welcomed asset and has made my job a lot easier.

I would also like to thank the shire for their continued support in supplying machinery and water trucks when required.

Ernie White Memorial

I would like to thank Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Darren Klemm for his attendance and speech on the day. Also, thanks to all other DFES staff that attended the event. A great opportunity to meet you all personally as well.

I thank the shire for their assistance in preparing and facilitating the memorial for Ernie White. Thanks to all staff and councillors involved.

Also, thank you to those of you in the community that contributed to the event in any way.

Lastly, A huge pat on the back to FCO Tim Heffernan, for all the hard work that you put in to organising the memorial piece and the day's proceedings.

It was deemed a very successful event.

7.2 Additional Fire Radios

The Chairperson held discussion regarding the need for additional fire radios to cover situations where hand-held portable units are insufficient.

Committee Decision

Resolution 230321-BFCO-08

Moved D White

Seconded T Heffernan

That Committee recommends to Council to purchase an additional two (2) base station fire radios and four (4) transferable vehicle radios to provide additional radio coverage for Bush Fire Control Officers, some of which are in light radio coverage areas.

7.3 Bush Fire Control Officer Honour Board

The Chief Executive Officer informed the meeting of Council's intention to provide a Board to honour all the District Bush Fire Control Officers. No resolution arising.

7.4 Telstra Mobile Phone Towers Power Outage

The Chairperson held discussion regarding the hazardous situation which occurs when Telstra Mobile Phone Towers lose power. No resolution arising.

7.5 Options for Shire of Wickepin to Complete Permits

The Chairperson held discussion regarding the Shire of Wickepin's ability to complete permits. Generally agreed this was not appropriate.

7.6 Chaff Dumping

The Chairperson held discussion regarding the proximity to paddock boundaries for chaff dumping. No resolution arising.

7.7 Road Verge Maintenance

The Chairperson held discussion regarding the need for property owners and the Shire of Wickepin to increase road verge management to reduce fuel loads. No resolution arising.

7.8 Encouragement of calls to 000

The Chairperson held discussion of the need to make sure all fires are reported through 000. The Area Narrogin Officer (East) advised this creates insurance coverage, is reported as brigade activation, creates a history for resource allocation, and allows compensation claims to be recognised.

Additionally, calls to the Communication Centre on 1800 198 140 or to the Regional Duty Coordinator on 1800 865 103 will have a similar outcome.

No resolution arising.

8 General Discussion

8.1 WA Kaolin Mine

General discussion regarding activities of WA Kaolin as regarding to fire mitigation.

8.2 WhatsApp Mobile Phone Application

General discussion regarding the request for all Bush Fire Control Officers to be on each Fire Brigade WhatsApp groups.

8.3 Meeting Times

General discussion on meeting times, noting the March meeting is good for elections and housekeeping and a meeting in August is good for preparation for the fire season.

9 Closure

The Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 8:41pm.