Minutes of the meeting of Bucklebury Parish Council held in The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury on Monday 12th January 2026 at 7pm

Present: Cllr. B. Dickens (Chairman); Cllr. J. Allum; Cllr. G. Loader; Cllr. G. Pask; Cllr. D. Southgate; Cllr. P. Teal; Cllr. C. Willett; Cllr. T. Williams; Cllr. G. Woods; District Cllr. C. Read; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).
One member of the public (Chairman of Bucklebury Memorial Hall).

1 **Public Session.**

1.1 Bucklebury Memorial Hall.

The Chairman of the Memorial Hall reported that the Committee tries to keep a healthy financial reserve to cover emergencies.
Over the past eighteen months the following improvements and maintenance have been undertaken:

- Invested in Hall Master – an online hall booking system.
- Upgraded the heating controller.
- Moved to new combination locks on the front doors of both halls.
- Constructed a safe, multiuser pedestrian access from Broad Lane to the front door of the main hall.
- Improved the disabled toilet.
- Replaced the flat roof.
- Replaced the apex of the roof (this had not been planned but was found to be necessary when the work on the flat roof was carried out).

Moving forwards, the following work is planned going from near term to longer term:

- Replace the front door on the Oak Room.
- Replace the paving slabs at the front of the hall.
- Improve/replace the electricity supply for the stage and the lighting bars.
- Replace the stage curtain track.
- Refurbish the toilets in the main hall. There is some discussion whether they should remain gender segregated or be all-gender cubicles.
- Install solar panels on the roof.

The work completed to date has been partially funded by a grant from Greenham Trust, who also matched a donation from BPC. The Chairman of the Memorial Hall Committee commented that the Hall Committee is very grateful for the support of BPC.
BPC has donations raised at Cemetery Carols for the Memorial Hall, and the donations raised for Hash and Chan on their departure, which they generously offered to give to the Memorial Hall.

2 **Apologies.**

There were apologies for absence from Cllr. Spours and Cllr. Windmill.

3 **Declarations of Interest.**

3.1 Register of Interests.

There were no changes to the register of interests.

3.2 Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items.

There were no declarations of interest.

4 No matters were raised during the public session.

5 **Minutes of the meeting of BPC on Monday 8th December 2025.**

The minutes of the meeting of BPC held on Monday 8th December 2025 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

6 **Chair's Report**

6.1 TRO on byway 67 past the Crystal Lodge.
A parishioner who lives off byway 67 has asked why there is no TRO on byway 67, as there is one on byway 56 (to the north of the Common straight). It was agreed that WBC Rights of Way should respond to this question.

6.2 War Memorials.
After WW1, it is thought that communities generally choose between having a hall or a war memorial. Bucklebury appears to have decided on a hall and the Victory Room (WW1) followed by the Memorial Hall (WW2) were developed. Whilst there are plaques to those who gave their lives in both wars in St. Mary's, Bucklebury, there is nothing at either of the halls to remember those who gave their lives.
Cllr. Allum will write an article for The Oaks, seeking the thoughts of parishioners, and speak to the Chairman of both the Victory Room and the Memorial Hall about possible options. JA

7 **Clerk's Report.**

7.1 Annual Parish Assembly Friday 8th May.
It was agreed that the Annual Parish Assembly would be held in the Memorial Hall. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Chapel Row Surgery, Thames Valley Police and Bucklebury Estate for short updates. HP
The key note speaker will be discussed at the February meeting.

7.2 Donations for Bucklebury Memorial Hall.
Cemetery Carols raised £537 for the Memorial Hall (after mulled wine costs). A total of £717.50 was collected for Hash and Chan. Hash generously offered to donate this money to the Memorial Hall. It is currently held outside of BPC funds.

7.3 Oaks.
The deadline for articles for the next edition of The Oaks is the 19th January. There was a discussion about possible articles.

8 **Planning.**

8.1 Planning applications on which BPC has been consulted by WBC:

8.1.1 **25/02832/HOUSE – Rushdens Cottage, Bucklebury Road (Stanford Dingley Parish).**
Section 73: Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) of planning permission reference 24/01284/HOUSE (Single storey rear extension, following demolition of a small plantroom. Clay tile hanging to frontage and side elevations to replace existing upvc cladding with new windows a new bay window and a new tiled roof front porch. Associated internal and external alterations). Amendment: Substitute approved drawings to allow a larger side extension to be built.
It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application.

8.1.2 **25/02959/HOUSE – Kolumbine, Tylers Lane.**
Two storey rear extension and remodelling of existing bungalow with solar panels to roof. (Relates to preapp 25/02247/PREHH).
Whilst it was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application, concern was raised about the clearance of the roof with the boundary of the neighbouring property Nutshell.

8.2 Planning Decisions made by WBC:

8.2.1 **25/02994/HOUSE – Bucklethwaite, Scotland Corner.**
Demolish existing double garage/store & room above and replace with Oak framed building with double garage/store/workshop with annex above.
BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

8.2.2 **25/02263/HOUSE – Red Hill House, Briff Lane.**
Section 73 Application to vary condition 2 (Approved Plans) of approved 23/00280/HOUSE. To change the drawing numbers to reflect some minor amendments to the scheme.

BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

8.2.3 **25/02487/HOUSE – Rivendell, Briff Lane.**

Replacement of existing conservatory with single storey extension and part conversion of garage to utility room and extension of garage, addition of solar panels for family providing special needs care.

BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

8.2.4 **25/02516/HOUSE – Ashdown House, The Slade.**

Proposed garage conversion with internal alterations and changes to external fenestration, including a new rear pergola. Proposed replacement porch and enhancements to the external appearance and energy efficiency of the dwelling.

BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

8.3 Adjacent Parish Applications.

There are no new applications within 200m of the parish boundary.

8.4 Local Plan.

Cllr. Dickens had sent a note to District Cllr. Read about the lack of progress with the Master Plan for NE Thatcham. District Cllr. Read in turn had written on the matter to District Councillors Brooks and Gains. No response has been received. It was questioned what is the current progress against the Planning Inspectors requirements for Master Planning and public consultation by the development consortium and WBC.

There was a discussion about the possible outcomes if two of the land owners were to opt for smaller developments.

8.5 Enforcement Issues.

8.5.1 **Postal Lockers at Peaches Store.**

Postal lockers have been installed on the forecourt of Peaches Store. The new manager is not understood to be responsible for them. It was agreed that District Cllr. Read would seek advice as to whether or not they require planning permission. CR

9 **District Councillor's Report.**

9.1 Highways.

There is a consultation on the proposed 20mph speed limits on various residential roads in Bucklebury Parish running until the 28th January.

WBC has received a "green" rating for the repair of potholes in a recent BBC news article. Potholes and resurfacing have seen an increase in focus since 2022.

9.2 Reading Borough Council Land Grab.

A parish survey has revealed that Purley residents would rather stay in West Berkshire than become part of Reading Borough Council, after the move to unitary authorities.

9.3 Latest Youth Survey.

Over 5,000 secondary school-age students have responded to a survey, which indicates they are feeling happier, safer and more supported than previously.

9.4 Funding.

It was noted that some departments within WBC (including Countryside) are only able to fund absolutely essential works.

9.5 Paradise Way.

The new properties in Paradise Way are now all occupied. However, it has come to light that they don't all appear to have as strong a local connection as had been hoped. District Cllr. Read will explore how this has happened. CR

10 **Finances.**

10.1 Payments to be approved:

The following payments have been set up to be paid:

Bank charges (10/11/25 to 9/12/25)	£4.75
Bucklebury Memorial Hall (rent for December meeting & coffee morning)	£35.28

Bibby Commercial Finance Ltd - December dog bins (discounted)	£40.80
Salary, pension, HMRC and minor expenses	£1,224.85
Mulled wine for Cemetery Carols	£96.65
External festoon lights	£116.96
Bucklebury Community Bus	£500.00
West Berkshire Countryside Society (Membership & donation)	£500.00
Pang Valley Flood Forum	£100.00
West Berks CAB	£100.00
CCB (Membership)	£35.00
GLEAM (Membership)	£15.00

10.2 Bank Reconciliation to the 12th January 2026.

The Clerk circulated a bank reconciliation to the 12th January 2026 which showed a balance of £30,815.52 in the Community Account once all payments and lodgements have cleared.

10.3 To review balances as per most recent statements:

Lloyds Community Account:	19/12/2025	£32,467.07
Lloyds Community Instant Access Account for meadows:	19/12/2025	£23,432.56
Scottish Widows Reserve Account:	1/4/2025	£33,810.52
Scottish Widows Gilroy Account:	1/4/2025	£4,728.25

10.4 Expenditure Against Budget to 31/12/2026.

The Clerk circulated a report of expenditure against budget to the 31st December 2025. This showed income of £48,778.41. Expenditure, totals £29,418.07, which splits into £21,108.07 for operational expenditure, £6,000 from ringfenced sums for the Memorial Hall and £2,310.00 on the Meadows.

10.5 Budget and Precept for FY26/27.

It was resolved to raise a precept of £45,000 for FY26/27. This is an increase of £5,000 on FY25/26.

11 **Fred Dawson Play Park and Pump Track.**

There were no new issues to report from the Play Park or the Pump track.

12 **Meadows.**

The West Berkshire Countryside Volunteers did an excellent job, in early December, clearing brambles from around the Mortons Lane entrance and around the kissing gate between the two largest meadows. They also cleared the western boundary of the large meadow which will enable BPC to define the boundary more clearly. Unfortunately, this work has revealed that most of the fence posts, supporting the stock fencing on the western boundary have rotted. A quote will be obtained for replacement posts. GP

The Volunteers are due out again, later this month and it was agreed to ask them to trim the hedge on the north side of the Hockett field.

In December, the dog bins were only emptied once by the contractor, and not weekly as per the contract. Cllr. Pask reported that he had spoken to the company, who have had changes to their staffing, and they have given BPC a credit for the missed emptying.

13 **Cemetery.**

13.1 Cemetery Gates.

The main gates at the front of the Cemetery are very difficult to open/close properly again due to the movement of the pillars and the wall.

It was agreed that Cllr. Teal and Cllr. Willett would inspect the wall and pillars and report back at the next meeting. PT CW

13.2 Burial Board Meeting.

The Clerk will organise a Burial Board Meeting. HP

14 **Highways.**

14.1 Speed Indicator Device in the Parish.

	The 12V battery charger connection has been repaired. In 2025, 565,322 vehicles were recorded by SID, an increase from 558,871 in 2024. Deployment is continuing in 2026. More volunteers are always welcome.	DS
14.2	Community Speed Watch (CSW).	
	The statistics for the CSW deployment of a total of 42 hours across the parish were shared.	DS
	On average there are 14.4 offenders per hour. This work has resulted in 578 letters being sent to the registered owners of speeding vehicles. Thanks were extended to Cllr. Pask who has carried out most if not all of the CSW deployment.	GP
	Deployment of CSW continues in 2026. More volunteers are always welcome.	
14.3	Permanent SID.	
	Progress with a permanent SID has been limited because WBC still has not published a policy for permanent SIDs. BPC has been told this is due to resources being used for the 20mph zones which are seen as a priority. There are mixed messages about the equipment which the WBC policy will support and this is causing big delays in the purchase and installation of kit.	
14.4	WBC 20mph zone consultation.	
	The agreed BPC response to the 20mph zones discussed with the consultant WSP in Glasglow was sent to both WBC and WSP. The resulting WBC public consultation on 20mph zones in Bucklebury did not reflect any of BPC's comments and negated the suggested 20mph time-based school restriction on Broad Lane. The WBC consultation closes on the 28th January 2026 and results are scheduled to be available on the 16th February 2026. BPC released a leaflet containing a slightly modified version of the consultation response (sent to WSP and WBC) which was circulated to most of Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row.	
14.5	Grit Bins.	
	Grit bins were checked and refilled where necessary prior to the recent cold weather. There is no stock of grit/salt remaining. It was agreed that the Clerk would order a new pallet of grit to the maximum value of £300. The bags must be placed on at least one pallet to keep them off the ground and reduce their water content. Bucklebury Farm has confirmed that they are gritting Pease Hill with the grit from the bin just inside their gate.	
14.5.1	**Grit Bin by the Swale.**	
	A grit bin by the swale is required in cold weather when the swale is flowing. A balance has to be found between the impact of grit/salt on the water and public protection.	CW
	It was noted that sand/grit could be used rather than salt. A green bin would be preferred.	HP
15	**Environment.**	
15.1	Sustainable Bucklebury.	
	There is a Bucklebury Repair Café event taking place on the 31st January at All Saint's Church.	
15.2	Mobile Phone Coverage.	
	Councillors were asked to carry out a survey of their local neighbours/local area and determine the strength of the mobile phone signal. Cllr. Williams agreed to correlate a report of this information and send it to Olivia Bailey MP.	TW
15.3	Bucklebury Community Bus Charity.	
	The trustees are planning to stand back at the end of the school year, so they are looking for new trustees. They are also looking for volunteer drivers (who need a D1 category on their driving license). The increase in numbers of children attending the Downs School is reducing the number of children needing and using the Community Bus for transport to and from Kennet School. As a result, there are now only two runs for drop off and collection (originally there were	

three). The reduction in numbers puts more pressure on the finances resulting in a need for more fundraising and incremental fee increases.

15.4 Beacon Lighting Event in May.
The event will take place on Friday 1st May from 7pm until 9pm at Chapel Row Green. Cllr. Woods reported that there would be various food options available. It is planned to have some form of live music and games.
It was suggested that any funds raised would be for the Memorial Hall.

16 **Round Table Comments.**

16.1 Pot Hole on Briff Lane.
This pot hole was marked up for repair within a couple of days of being reported.

16.2 Hatch Lane.
WBC resurfaced Hatch Lane, however Thames Water then damaged it, resulting in another repair. As a result, there is now a significant drop at the edge of the road surface.

16.3 Fly Tipping.
Fly tipping occurred in the Slade on Sunday 11th January between 6pm and 10pm.

16.4 Litter on Harts Hill.
Cllr. Read will take up the issue of litter on Harts Hill with Veolia.

16.5 Parking on Fanny's Lane, The Slade and Holly Lane.
Vehicles parked in these areas are suspected to be used for drug dealing. It was suggested that where safe to do so number plates of such vehicles are recorded and passed to TVP.

16.6 Defibrillator Database.
The defibrillator at Chapel Row Surgery is not registered on the national defibrillator database.

16.7 Bucklebury Primary School.
Numbers at Bucklebury Primary School are believed to have fallen. It was agreed that Cllr. Dickens would invite the Chair of Governors to attend a BPC meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9.30pm.

Date of next meetings:

BPC Meeting:

Monday 9th February 2026 at 7pm – The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury.

Signed . . . . . Date . . . . . .