Minutes of a Meeting of Bucklebury Parish Council held in The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury on Monday 10th August 2026 at 7pm

Present: Cllr. B. Dickens (Chairman); Cllr. J. Allum; Cllr. G. Pask; Cllr. D. Southgate; Cllr. P. Teal; Cllr. C. Willett; Cllr. T. Williams; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).
Two members of the public (including Piers Allison).

1 **Public Session.**
No issues were raised during the public session.

2 **Apologies**.
Apologies for absence from Cllr. Loader, Cllr. Woods and District Cllr. Read were received and accepted.

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 in any agenda items.

4 **Minutes of the meeting of BPC on Monday 13th July 2026.**
The minutes of the meeting of BPC held on Monday 13th July 2026 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by Cllr. Dickens.

5 **Vacant Councillor Position.**

5.1 Co-option to the East Ward.
Cllr. Pask proposed that Bob Anderson be co-opted on to BPC representing the East Ward. This was seconded by Cllr. Teal and unanimously agreed.
The Clerk will contact Cllr. Anderson about his acceptance of office and declaration of interests. HP

5.2 Vacancy on the West Ward.
Two parishioners have expressed interest in the vacant position representing the West Ward of Bucklebury Parish.
All councillors will serve until the elections in May 2027, when they stand down and newly elected (potentially uncontested) councillors form BPC.

6 **Clerk's Report.**

6.1 Permitted Path from Bucklebury Village to Briff Lane.
An email from the Steward of the Manor had been received concerning the temporary closure of the permitted path (for Bucklebury Villagers), behind the Old Vicarage and along the Pang and coming out by the hump back bridge, due to the amount of dog fouling. The conditions on opening a new permitted path from Bucklebury Village to Briff Lane were based on there being no dog fouling, so this will inevitably lead to a delay.
Cllr. Willett asked why a permitted path to the north was not being explored. The land to the north and south of Marlston Road between Walnut Tree Cottages and Waven (or the Recreation Ground) belong to Bucklebury Estate. It is only the land owner who can give an official permitted path.

7 **Planning.**

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

7.1.1 **26/01366/HOUSE & 26/01367/LBC – Old Hawkridge House.**
Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of replacement single-storey extension to north-west elevation. Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of replacement porch to south-west elevation. Fenestration changes.

This proposal will change the main entrance of the house from the north side to the south side. It was reported that a vehicular access has been added via a gravel track to the south, although the plans do not include this.
It was agreed that whilst BPC has no objection to the architectural changes, it **objects** to the application on the basis of:

- the new driveway not being shown on the plans,
- the terracing to the south west, which will be approximately 2.5m high and require a retaining wall and some form of balustrade, neither of which are shown on the plans.

7.1.2 **26/01573/HOUSE – Ladywood, Long Grove.**
Resubmission of application number 25/02574/HOUSE – Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, porch to the front, veranda, addition of windows and solar panels.
It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application.

7.1.3 **26/01052/HOUSE – Well Cottage, Long Grove.**
Installation of a traditional Victorian style greenhouse 9ft x 16ft.
It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application.

7.2 Planning Decisions made by WBC:

7.2.1 **26/00702/FUL – Ashdown House, The Slade.**
Erection of an agricultural barn for the storage of machinery, vehicles, feed and associated materials, together with ancillary workspace and animal welfare facilities.
BPC **objected** to this application which has been **withdrawn.**
It was noted that a mobile home was delivered to this site during the weekend of the 8th/9th August 2026.

7.2.2 **26/00845/FUL – Picton Farm, The Slade.**
The construction of an agricultural storage Barn and hardstanding utilizing the existing stable yard access from Holly Lane. Associated fencing, landscape planting and SW drainage.
BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

7.3 Adjacent Parish Applications.
No new applications within 200m of the parish boundary have been validated since the last BPC meeting.

7.4 NE Thatcham (NET) Master Planning.
Cllr. Dickens reported that he is attending a meeting with the Chairman of other Parish Councils within the Bucklebury Ward and Cold Ash PC with District Cllr. Jeff Brooks (Leader of WBC) which will be chaired by District Cllr. Read. Prior to the meeting Cllr. Brooks will be briefed:

- WBC planning department are struggling: they have not identified all of the parameters for the NET development; the website site has not been updated since mid-April and an updated timetable has still not been published.
- There is an increased political risk based on purdah for the Ridgeway Council elections in May 2027, and the formation of Ridgeway Council with its own Local Plan. These continuing delays have the potential to attract the attention of Central Government.
- The continuing lack of progress could lead to canvassers experiencing frustration on the doorstep.

Expected outcomes from the meeting include:

1. When a realistic timetable to be expected?
2. When and what type of engagement is there to be with Parish and Town Councils?
3. BPC submitted various documents and information; where is the commitment to respond and consider these?

4. How are transport and infrastructure (water and sewage) going to be handled; they need to be in place before any planning applications are approved.
5. WBC has a consultant receiving all input and consolidating it, however it is unclear whether this consultant will be accessible to the Parish and Town Councils.

7.5 Enforcement Matters.

7.5.1 **Courier Boxes.**

Cllr. Dickens has reported the courier boxes at Peaches stores to WBC Enforcement, after a number of conversations encouraging the owner to submit a lawful development application.

WBC Enforcement has now requested that a planning application be submitted.

8 **District Councillor's Report.**

District Cllr. Read circulated a report prior to the meeting.

8.1 Local Government Reorganisation.

Central Government has announced that West Berkshire will become part of the new Ridgeway Council, with South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse.

9 **River Pang Floodplain Restoration project downstream of Bucklebury.**

Since the last meeting, Cllr. Pask, Cllr. Southgate, Cllr. Willett, Cllr. Woods and the Clerk have attended a presentation from ARK (Action for the River Kennet) and Bucklebury Estate on a project to restore the River Pang floodplain between Bucklebury and Stanford Dingley. The project will take place on privately owned land, some of which is in Stanford Dingley Parish. At this stage, the information was shared with BPC for information only. Piers Allison and another well informed parishioner, with significant knowledge and data on the river, have posed questions about the project and remain concerned.

Piers Allison reported to the meeting that ARK and Bucklebury Estate have been working with the Pang Flagship Chalk Stream Partnership to improve the condition of the River Pang (but not addressing sewage). Various schemes are at different stages of implementation along the length of the River Pang, however it is understood that the Hampstead Norreys scheme has been withdrawn.

The PVFF (Pang Valley Flood Forum) first became aware of the Bucklebury scheme at the end of 2025. The PVFF will be meeting with Atkinsons (the consultant undertaking the modelling and planning) to find out more about the proposals. The first scheme was to punch a hole in the bund between Bucklebury and Stanford Dingley, however, after questions were asked, this scheme was withdrawn.

The work is expected to require a planning application, and any application must be supported by the maths.

The following questions/information have been raised with Atkinsons about their modelling:

1. What assumptions (historic data) has been used? If the data from 23/24 and 24/25 were used, was consideration given to the trees lying in the river which affected the flow (these have now been removed).
2. There should be demonstration of the stage-by-stage storage capacity of the flood plain.
3. Quantitative flood and climate change predictions for potential flooding of Stanford Dingley.
4. Model sensitivity analysis.
5. Who is excepting liability for the scheme and giving safety sign off?
6. Has there been any work on water degeneration in low flow situations?

The scheme will not change the flood risk posed to Bucklebury, but it may affect Stanford Dingley.

Whilst the existing models may be out of date, the models give output based on the input given, which can be highly tuned.

It is the responsibility of the riparian owners to ensure that water channels remain clear and are managed. The environmental benefits of the scheme, whilst being publicised as good, are questioned.
It was noted that DEFRA are providing seed funding for the consultancy work and offer stewardship schemes for the land lost.
Piers Allison was thanked for attending and sharing his view of the scheme.

10 **Finances.**

10.1 Payments to be approved:

The following payments have been paid or set up to be paid since the last meeting:

Bank charges (10/6/2026 to 9/7/2026)	£4.25
Bucklebury Memorial Hall (Rent for BPC meeting on 13/7/2026)	£21.38
Bucklebury Memorial Hall (Rent July coffee morning)	£17.10
Bibby Commercial Finance Ltd (July bins)	£71.92
Staff costs	£1,206.60

A grant of £1,000 has been received from Veolia, for Bucklebury Repair Café.

10.2 Bank Reconciliation to the 10th August 2026.

The balance in the Community Account on the bank reconciliation showed a balance of £37,069.21 once all transactions have cleared. This was reconciled back to the balance of £38,390.46 shown on the statement dated the 20th July 2026.

10.3 To review balances as per most recent statements:

Lloyds Community Account:	20/7/2026	£38,390.46
Lloyds Community Instant Access Account for meadows:	20/7/2026	£23,503.33
Scottish Widows Reserve Account:	1/4/2026	£34,202.26
Scottish Widows Gilroy Account:	1/4/2026	£4,783.03

11 **Emergency Planning.**

Given the dry, hot weather concern has been raised about the fire risk in the Parish. Cllr. Pask agreed to work on an Emergency / Resilience Plan for the Parish to dovetail into the work which WBC and the Thames Valley Resilience Forum have carried out.
It was agreed that the plan should identify what can be done with the limited resources available.
Thames Water are still being challenged about what happened at the Harts Hill Pumping Station at the recent fire on Burdens Heath when the pump stopped, so leaving RBFRS initially without a water supply to fight the fire.

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

12.1 Play Park.

The playpark continues to be well used with little to no litter being found during inspections. However, at the last inspection the litter bin was full and close to overflowing. The hot weather has resulted in further shrinkage of the timber components of the multiplay unit and required additional tightening of the fixings. The repair carried out to the decayed wood at the base of the vertical support post has proved successful and will be monitored in the coming months.

12.2 BMX Track.

12.3 Funding for the resurfacing work.

The Good Exchange has awarded a grant of £2,000 to the resurfacing project. The Good Exchange has also agreed to match fund donations up to £5,000. The Clerk has applied to WBC for the Members Bid to be paid to the Good Exchange, which should then be matched. This will give a total grant via the Good Exchange of £12,000. However, orders cannot be placed until the match funding has been paid. HP

12.4	Work on the Bike Track. Two extra quotes have been obtained for the work and Brennans have been asked to review their quote which they have done and it now includes an overlay of recycled road plannings and a more flexible polymer based bitmac for the top surface due to cracks which have appeared in the surface due to the hot dry weather. It was agreed to accept Brennans quote for the work, who can be instructed once the WBC Members bid has been received by the Good Exchange.	PT HP
13	**Cemetery.**	
13.1	Grounds Maintenance. It was agreed to accept a quote of £700 to cut the grass at the Cemetery.	
13.2	Update on proposed work on the Wall. A second quote has been received of just under £10,000 which includes a jockey wheel for the gate and foundations. Cllr. Willett needs to consider the differences between the two quotes. It has been estimated that to fell or pollard the trees around the edge of the Cemetery, which are causing the cracks, would cost between £20,000 and £30,000. A third quote is needed in order to comply with the Financial Regulations. Cllr. Southgate has spoken to the local blacksmith about strapping the gate pillars back to the ends of the wall and this would be expected to cost approximately £1,000.	CW DS
14	**Halls.**	
14.1	Memorial Hall Funding. Cllr. Dickens and Cllr. Allum have met with the Chairman and the Treasurer of the Memorial Hall in order to gain a better understanding of their financial situation and what essential maintenance is needed. Work needs to be carried out on the roof, including the addition of insulation above the stage, the toilets need to undergo their long talked about improvements and the path in front of the hall needs to be rebuilt. In the short term, eighty new chairs are needed. It was agreed that BPC could spend up to £1,600, excluding VAT on these chair and gift them to the hall, funded by the donations received at Cemetery Carols and from the funds generously donated by Hash and Chan when they left Peaches stores.	 HP
14.2	How to support the Memorial Hall moving forwards. The approximate costs for the essential maintenance work are: Toilet improvements: £25,000 Roof: £5,000 Path: £13,000 Various ways of how BPC could support the Memorial Hall with these projects were discussed, including the possibility of using the precept.	
15	**Highways.**	
15.1	Installation of VAS/SIDs in the parish. WBC has given a licence for 3 posts to mount a VAS/SID on: Burdens Heath, Scotland Corner, and the top of Harts Hill. The approximate cost for the installation of posts at these locations is £1,060.00. Under the rules for temporary SIDs, the devices need to be moved every two weeks and not return to the same position for six weeks. This means that for two SIDs, eight locations are required. It is hoped that each of the three posts can be used in both directions and each of the two permanent fixed VAS posts may be used in the opposite direction to the permanent sign (this needs to be verified). It was agreed that up to £8,000 could be spent on two temporary solar SIDs and the installation of the 3 posts.	 DS

15.2 Thames Valley Police (TVP) Community Speed Watch (CSW) in the parish.
There continues to be a small pool of volunteers; more are needed. The volunteers took part in the annual CSW National Day of Action.
TVP have raised concerns about the number of dormant sites in the parish, but it is felt that the limited resources need to be used where they have the most impact.

15.3 Parking at Chapel Row.
At a meeting on Wednesday 5th August with the managers of The Blade Bone, The Diddy Deli, Bucklebury Estate, Cllr. Dickens, Cllr. Williams and the Clerk, the following parking options were considered:

1. Alongside Hatch Lane.
2. At the Chapel Row Surgery.
3. In marked parking bays on the main road.
4. Other plots of land within the immediate vicinity.

Bucklebury Estate are currently working with landowners on a scheme to potentially provide some parking on land in the immediate vicinity, however this will take time. As a shorter-term solution, WBC Highways will be asked about marking parking spaces on the main road. This should have the added benefit of slowing down traffic. HP

16 **Environment/Community.**

16.1 Sustainable Bucklebury.
Sustainable Bucklebury will be hosting a stall at Bucklebury Beer Fest.

16.1.1 **Community Orchard**
Cllr. Allum has been ensuring there is sufficient water to keep the fruit trees planted in the Community Orchard watered during the hot dry weather. This has required significantly more water than had been anticipated. It was agreed that Cllr. Allum would submit an invoice for £100 for his expenses. JA

16.2 Mobile Phone Signal.
There was no update on the mobile phone signal. TW

16.3 Chapel Row Boules Court.
There was no update on the Boules Court. TW

16.4 Cottage Inn Fireworks.
It was agreed that Cllr. Dickens and Cllr. Southgate would visit the landlord of The Cottage Inn to inquire about the plans for Bonfire night and the associated fireworks. BD DS

17 **Correspondence.**

17.1 Request for donation for WB Children in Care Celebration.
It was questioned how many children from Bucklebury may benefit from this. The Clerk will circulate the letter and it will be considered at the September BPC meeting. HP

18 **Round Table Comments.**

18.1 Extension to path on the Common.
Bucklebury Estate has obtained funding to extend the "yellow brick road" paths between Fannys Lane and the Slade, following requests from parishioners.

18.2 Flagpole on St. Mary's Church.
Questions were asked about why no flag has been flying from the church tower. The support beam under the flag pole has been showing signs of rotting; work is in hand to resolve the issue.

18.3 Central white lines through Bucklebury Village.
The white lines in the middle of the road through Bucklebury Village were painted on a Saturday evening. BPC did not request them.

18.4 Fire Risk Signs.
The Clerk has a copy of the RBFRS high fire risk signs. It was agreed to put them up at the entrances to the meadows, the Hockett Field and at the Play area behind the Memorial Hall.

The meeting concluded at 9.30pm.

Date of next meetings:

BPC Meeting:

Monday 14th September 2026 at 7pm – The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury.

Planning Meeting:

Monday 24th August 2026 at 7.15pm - Committee Room at the Victory Room, Bucklebury Village. (Cancelled)

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