Minutes of the meeting of Bucklebury Parish Council held in The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury on Monday 9th February 2026 at 7pm

Present: Cllr. D. Southgate (Vice Chairman); Cllr. J. Allum; Cllr. G. Loader; Cllr. P. Spours; Cllr. P. Teal; Cllr. C. Willett; Cllr. T. Williams; Cllr. L. Windmill; Cllr. G. Woods; District Cllr. C. Read; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).
No members of the public.

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

2 **Apologies.**
There were apologies for absence from Cllr. Dickens and Cllr. Pask.

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 12th January 2026.**
The minutes of the meeting of BPC held on Monday 12th January 2026 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by Cllr. Southgate.

6 **Chair's Report.**
The Chairman didn't raise any issues.

7 **Clerk's Report.**

7.1 Planning Committee.
It was agreed to start planning committee meetings at 7.15pm to relieve the congestion at the start of meetings.

7.2 Annual Parish Assembly Friday 8th May.
It was agreed that Cllr. Woods would invite a representative from Action for the River Kennet (ARK) to talk about work which has been carried out and is planned for the River Pang. GW
It is planned that there will also be short updates from Chapel Row Surgery, Bucklebury Estate and Thames Valley Police. HP

7.3 Oaks.
The Oaks, which ran to 20 pages, has been delivered to all houses across the parish.

7.4 Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).
In order to comply with the new assertion 10 of the AGAR, BPC must:

- Have an email account hosted on an authority owned domain
- Have a website which meets all legal requirements including accessibility
- Have a website which must include documentation specified in the Freedom of Information Act and the Transparency Code.
- Follow the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA).
- Process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection.
- Have an IT policy which explains how the clerk and councillors conduct BPC business in a secure and legal way.

BPC complies with these conditions, with the exception of an IT policy. The Clerk will circulate a draft IT policy to councillors for adoption at the March BPC meeting. HP

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

7.5 Trees adjacent to the Road at Chapel Row.
The Clerk has received a call from a concerned resident at Chapel Row. A small limb fell from one of the oak trees onto the pavement, narrowly missing a pedestrian. The Clerk will report the incident to Bucklebury Estate and WBC. HP

8 **Planning.**

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

8.1.1 **26/00089/HOUSE – Kilcreggan, Upper Bucklebury.**
Two storey side extension and single storey front extension.
It was questioned whether just the first floor of the extension and existing hanging tiles were to be replaced by stained softwood cladding or the whole of the first floor.
It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application subject to the softwood cladding only being used to replace the hanging tiles and on the extension.

8.2 Planning Decisions made by WBC:

8.2.1 **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.
BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

8.2.2 **25/02544/PACOU – Glenvale Nurseries, Hungerford Lane (Bradfield Parish).**
Application under General Permitted Development Order (England) Order 2015 (as amended) – Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Change of use of existing agricultural building to B8 storage and distribution.
BPC made **no comment** on this application which has been **refused** by WBC.

8.2.3 **25/02574/HOUSE – Ladywood, Long Grove.**
Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, porch to the front, veranda, addition of windows and solar panels.
BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **refused** by WBC.

8.3 Adjacent Parish Applications.
There are no new applications within 200m of the parish boundary.

8.4 Local Plan/SP14 (North East Thatcham).
There were no updates on the production of the Masterplan for SP14. It was agreed that a Freedom of Information Request would be sent to WBC to clarify whether any progress has been made with the proposed development. Cllr. Spours will submit the request. PS

8.5 Enforcement Issues.
WBC is currently running a consultation on a revised Enforcement Policy. It was agreed that Cllr. Spours would respond on behalf of BPC.

9 **District Councillor's Report.**

9.1 Government Funding Reductions**.**
Following an extraordinary WBC meeting, District Cllr. Jeff Brook has agreed to write to MPs Lee Dillion and Olivia Bailey, and to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government to set out the significant challenges created by the reduced funding settlement to WBC.
West Berkshire will receive just over a third of the average increase given to councils across the country, leaving it among the hardest hit areas nationally.
The WBC budget for 2026/27 will be published in early February ahead of the full council meeting on the 26th February.
It is expected that there will be approximately 50 redundancies at WBC as a result of the funding situation.

9.2 Libraries.
A ground breaking reports shows the social value of WBC libraries, in particular the support to mental health and wellbeing through the provision of volunteering opportunities. The report shows that the WBC libraries deliver at least £12,221 in value each year.

9.3 Government consultation on opportunity to change local councils.
There is a Central Government consultation running, until the 26th March 2026, on the proposed reorganisation of councils, asking for residents' views on the three different proposals put forwards for Oxfordshire, two of which would see West Berkshire joining with South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse to form a new "Ridgeway Council".
The councils involved are backing the two-unitary model (the new Ridgeway Council and the rest of Oxfordshire), which is felt to offer the best outcomes for local residents.
Central Government is expected to make its decision before the summer recess in July.
It was questioned how much the reorganisation will cost and what will happen to WBC's debt.

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)	£9.07
The Alpha Xperience (The Oaks)	£435.00
The Alpha Xperience (20mph flyers)	£58.38
Bibby Commercial Finance Ltd (January bins)	£53.04
Microsoft (10 x user licenses)	£446.40
Staff costs and expenses	£1,237.35

It was agreed to pay the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) by direct debit each year which will result in a fee of £47.00 (reduced from £52.00 by paying by direct debit). Direct debits will be reviewed at the Annual BPC meeting in May. HP

10.2 Bank Reconciliation to the 9th February 2026.
The Clerk circulated a bank reconciliation to the 9th February 2026 which showed a balance of £28,576.28 in the Community Account once all payments and lodgements have cleared. Cllr. Teal verified the bank reconciliation against the bank statements.

10.3 To review balances as per most recent statements:

Lloyds Community Account:	20/1/2026	£30,835.52
Lloyds Community Instant Access Account for meadows:	20/1/2026	£23,444.50
Scottish Widows Reserve Account:	1/4/2025	£33,810.52
Scottish Widows Gilroy Account:	1/4/2025	£4,728.25

11 **Fred Dawson Play Park and Pump Track.**
Cllr. Teal reported that there has been little, if any use of the play park due to the ground being waterlogged as a result of the persistent rainfall. No litter was found in the play area. However, there is damage to the perimeter fencing which appears to have been caused by a vehicle running into a post.

11.1 Bike track.
The bike track is waterlogged with standing water in several areas, particularly on the low points.
Unfortunately, the youth shelter has been the subject of graffiti during the last week. Cllr. Teal will paint this over when weather conditions allow.
The preferred tarmac contractor has been contacted to update them on the current funding position for resurfacing the track.

12	**Cemetery.**	
12.1	Cemetery Walls and Gate. Cllr. Willett and Cllr. Teal have inspected the walls of the Cemetery and produced a report (with pictures) which will be circulated once the size is reduced for email. It was agreed that builders should be identified who could provide quotes. Cllr. Willett will look at how to sensibly break the work into phases. Cllr. Allum will look at the trees with a view to them being pollarded. Cllr. Southgate will talk to the local blacksmith and Hurstborne Forge about possibilities to keep the gate pillars a constant distance apart.	CW JA DS
13	**Highways.**	
13.1	Speed Indicator Device in the Parish. SID continues to be deployed and is currently in Bucklebury Village, having been in Chapel Row.	DS
13.2	Community Speed Watch (CSW). CSW sessions have been limited due to weather conditions. Volunteers are now organising some of the sessions themselves which is a very positive development.	DS GP
13.3	WBC 20mph zone consultation. The results of the 20mph consultation for Bucklebury are expected later this month. It was questioned whether the results of the Thatcham 20mph consultation had been published	
13.4	Grit Bins. A pallet of salt/grit has been ordered which will be delivered to Red Hill House.	
13.5	Road to Cold Ash. There is significant flooding on the Ridge between the southern end of Holly Lane and the parish boundary. The camber of the road is such that the water runs towards the bank and there is no drain or culvert. Cllr. Southgate may have dashcam footage showing the problem.	
14	**Environment.**	
14.1	Sustainable Bucklebury. Two grants have been approved by Veolia, one for the Repair Café and one for the Community Orchard. Both grants are for £1,000, but to date only one has been received.	
14.1.1	**Bucklebury Repair Café.** The second, very successful, Bucklebury Repair Café was run on the 31st January at All Saint's Church. There were over 50 visitors, with 24 items repaired from the 31 repair requests. It is planned that there will be a Repair Café in Bucklebury every quarter.	
14.1.2	**Bucklebury Primary School** Members of Sustainable Bucklebury attended Bucklebury Primary School to introduce the idea of living sustainably and about reduce, reuse, recycle. It is hoped that the group will be able to involve the school in future projects, including the community orchard.	
14.1.3	**Community Orchard.** A number of helpers have come forwards who are interested in a community orchard. Cllr. Allum has drawn out a plan of the orchard, with a list of suitable trees. Sixteen trees, which are two years old, will be sourced from Penwood Nurseries and paid for by BPC from a Veolia grant. Cllr. Allum put forwards that the area for the Community Orchard could be in either the small meadow, nearest Broad Lane, or in the northern meadow. It was agreed that the small meadow was the better location on the grounds that it is closer to the community.	
14.1.4	**Plastic Reduction** A volunteer has been found to look at plastic reduction in our local community. This involves engaging with local businesses and organisations to reduce use of single use plastics. It is part of the "Plastic Free" scheme which aims to reduce plastic use.	

14.1.5	**Next Meeting of Sustainable Bucklebury** The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 24th February in the Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury at 7.45pm.	
14.2	Update on the Common. The contractor is continuing to clear under the wires between Pease Hill and Chapel Row (along byway 56). Work to remove the holly and brambles around the Oaks on the avenue will take place during February.	
14.3	Mobile Phone Coverage. It is understood that the MP Olivia Bailey is going to talk to the mobile phone providers about improving the mobile phone signal. Companies are turning off the 3G signal in preference for 5G, but the number of masts is reducing. Concern was raised about the financial position of Gigaclear, who many of the parish depend on for both Broadband and mobile phones (VoIP). District Cllr. Read will start a conversation with Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group (Berkshire DIG). It was agreed that mobile phone coverage should be considered at a BPC meeting on a quarterly basis.	CR
14.4	Beacon Lighting Event in May. Community groups in the parish have been contacted and invited to come along and run a game or have some form of stall at the event on the Friday 1st May. Responses are still awaited from a number. Unfortunately, Cllr. Allum is not around for the event. Bucklebury Primary School is keen to be involved. A fish and chip, and a burger van have been booked for the evening. Volunteers are needed to run more of the games. Large tents or a marquee would be useful in case of bad weather. Cllr. Williams will enquire if a Chapel Row resident has one which may be available.	GW TW
15	**Round Table Comments.**	
15.1	Potholes. Two major potholes on the Avenue, just before Bradfield Southend were noted.	
15.2	Rights of Way through Greyfield Wood. It was questioned whether the rights of way through Greyfield Wood (possibly Ironmongers Copse) are in the correct location.	
15.3	Victory Room. The Victory Room Committee has agreed that a water butt may be installed. Up to £100 may be spent on this for watering the trees marking Graham Pask's and Erica Tipton's work in the parish.	
15.4	Speakers in the Memorial Hall. Cllr. Southgate purchased a PA system for St. Martin's Club, came to use it and found the Memorial Hall speakers and wiring had been removed. It was felt to make sense for the hall to have speakers rather than all of the groups who might use them having to have and store their own.	
15.5	Planning on the BPC website. The interface for HugoFox to access the planning applications and obtain the data from the WBC website has now been made available. It is hoped that the BPC website will have the planning application function running correctly very soon.	

The meeting concluded at 8.55pm.

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

Date of next meetings:

BPC Meeting:

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

Planning Meeting:

Monday 23rd February 2026 at 7.15pm – The Meeting Room, The Victory Room, Bucklebury.

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