Minutes of the meeting of Bucklebury Parish Council held in The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury on Monday 13th April 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).
Three members of the public.

A minute's silence was held to remember Peter Spours, former Bucklebury Parish Councillor who died on the 26th March 2026.

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

2 **Apologies.**
There were apologies for absence from 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 **Minutes of the meeting of BPC on Monday 9th March 2026.**
The minutes of the meeting of BPC held on Monday 9th March 2026 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by Cllr. Dickens.

5 **Chair's Report.**

5.1 N.E. Thatcham.
A new timeline has been produced by WBC which compresses the activities involved in producing the Masterplan for NE Thatcham. It is anticipated that the Masterplan will be adopted at a full meeting of WBC in November 2026.
On the 21st April, there is a meeting in Thatcham for stakeholders, including parish councils. This is to be followed by drop-in sessions in Bucklebury (on the 24th April), Cold Ash and Thatcham. There has been little notice for any of these sessions. WBC has produced a leaflet which is being delivered to all houses in the parish.
Written comments can be submitted to WBC until the 14th May.
Cllr. Dickens has contacted Andrew Black (Planning Consultant) and agreed that the top issues for Bucklebury are: traffic, the site exits, green infrastructure and environmental issues. It is assumed that Thatcham will cover flooding.
It is noted that originally, vehicular access was all onto the A4 or Floral Way, but access points are being shown on Harts Hill Road. Green infrastructure was to occupy 50% of the land, but that is now an "aspiration". It is questioned whether 2,500 homes can be accommodated on the 170-hectare site. Cllr. Willett suggested the possibility of developing a CAD image of the proposed development. CW
District Cllr. Read commented that it is disappointing that WBC are rushing the Master planning. He is meeting with Jeff Brooks on the 29th April. WBC had to extend the deadline for the call for sites for the next Local Plan. There is concern that WBC are missing their target housing numbers. At a public meeting in Woolhampton, Thames Water commented that they will be doubling the size of the Lower Way sewage treatment plant in 2028/29, which is needed in order for the NE Thatcham houses to be occupied. It is also noted that the NE Thatcham site contains gulleys, the bottom of which are clay and therefore not ideally suited for building.

Questions were asked about the status of the Local Plan after the potential end of WBC (following the Local Government reorganisation).

5.2 Parcel Lockers at Peaches.

Cllr. Dickens met with the owner of Peaches Stores after one set of lockers had been installed, but prior to the second set arriving. The company who operates the lockers had said that no planning permission is needed. Cllr. Dickens advised the owner that WBC Planning Department should be contacted, as even if they can be installed under permitted development rights a "preapp" is required. It was agreed that BPC would contact WBC enforcement.

Post meeting note: The owner will be applying for a certificate of lawful development. If this is not given he would need to submit a retrospective planning application.

5.3 Boules Pitch on Chapel Row Green.

This project has already cost hundreds of pounds for a project which only requires scraping 15cm of the top surface away. Notwithstanding this WBC has deemed a planning application is required.

6 **Clerk's Report.**

6.1 Vacant Position on BPC.

Notices have been placed on the BPC website and across the parish, notifying residents of the vacancy on the East Ward following the resignation and subsequent death of Peter Spours. The 14-working day period during which parishioners may request a by-election has now ended and WBC has not notified BPC of such a request, therefore enabling BPC to co-opt a new councillor, when a candidate is found.

6.2 Annual Parish Assembly (Friday 8th May 2026 in the Memorial Hall).

Thames Valley Police have been contacted about giving an update. Representatives of Chapel Row Surgery and Bucklebury Estate will both be giving an update.

The Clerk will organise refreshments and glasses. HP

6.3 Common Clearing and associated Fly tipping.

After Common Clearing, the skip remains at the Memorial Hall until at least Monday morning. During this time there is a tendency for parishioners to deposit larger items in the skip (if there is space), or alongside it. If items are put alongside the skip they will not be collected by the skip company and have to be removed by WBC; essentially it is fly tipping on Memorial Hall land.

Following the March event, carpet and other materials were deposited alongside the skip on the Sunday following Common Clearing; the skip was full. The offending vehicle has been identified on the CCTV and there is a good idea of who the offender is. It was agreed that a letter be sent to him, to explain that he is fly tipping and requesting him not to do it again. HP

6.4 Litter Bins on the Common.

The litter bins on the Common, which should be emptied by WBC's contractors, weren't showing on the WBC map; this has been corrected. However, they don't appear to be being emptied on a weekly basis. It was agreed that the situation would be monitored.

6.5 Emergency Plan.

The Clerk attended an Emergency Plan and Community Resilience workshop run by HALC and the Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

Whilst parishes are encouraged to have an Emergency Plan, they are not mandatory. Essentially their purpose is to identify what threats are relevant to each parish and how parishes might be able to deal with any such emergency.

In the past, Emergency Plan training has been very much focused about how to write an Emergency Plan from the bottom up. This was different in that it was a top down approach, although it didn't really identify how a Parish Emergency Plan would be put to use.

7 **Planning.**

7.1 Ratification of comments submitted to WBC on the following applications:

7.1.1 **26/00420/FUL & 26/00421/LBC – Picton Farm, The Slade.**
S73a and S19 applications to vary condition 2 Plans of planning permission 25/01790/FUL and 25/01791/LBC for The repair and conversion of existing outbuildings to ancillary residential use. The repair and extension of an existing storage outbuilding following demolition of small existing store. Installation of replacement surface water and foul water drainage. Replacement entrance gates, form new parking area and path to Farmhouse. Definition of the residential curtilage associated with Picton Farm.
It was ratified that BPC has **no objection** to these applications.

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

7.2.1 **26/00598/AGRIC – Hillfoot Farm, Hillfoot.**
Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: New building – Steel framed shed.
The new building is for a market gardening business which delivers to local customers. The business is going from strength to strength. The building is needed for storage of equipment and packaging. There is no selling direct to customers at the site.
It was agreed that BPC **supports** this application based on the benefits it brings to the whole parish.

7.2.2 **26/00685/HOUSE – Amber, Pease Hill.**
Erection of front and side extension; with associated internal and external alterations.
It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application.

7.3 Planning Decisions made by WBC:

7.3.1 **26/00038/HOUSE – Smithincott, The Avenue, Bucklebury.**
New multifuel burning stove and associated external flue.
BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

7.3.2 **26/00245/HOUSE – Stag Cottage, Zin Zan.**
Single storey side, rear extension to provide entrance lobby and lounge.
BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

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

8 **District Councillor's Report.**

8.1 District Parish Conference – 29th April.
The next District Parish Conference will take place at 6.30pm on Wednesday 29th April in the WBC Council chamber and via Zoom.

8.2 Residents' Survey.
A consultation is currently taking place on residents' experiences on key services, communications and wellbeing.

8.3 Consultation on proposed Heritage Assets in the Parish.
A consultation is currently running on proposed nominations for new Heritage Assets which includes an air raid shelter at a property in Briff Lane and Morton's Chapel on Turners Green.

9 **Finances.**

9.1 To review expenditure against budget for FY25/26.
Total income for FY25/26 was £50,032.52 (excluding interest on the Scottish Widows accounts) against a budgeted income of £45,247.53 which excluded any grants, but included £3,090 in reclaimed VAT. Grants of £7,400 were received through the year.
General expenditure was £29,347.66 against budgeted expenditure of £37,345.78. This is largely accounted for by minimum expenditure on Cemetery maintenance and no maintenance on the BMX track or play area.
Whilst it had been planned to donate £3,000 to the Memorial Hall from ring fenced sums, this was increased to the full amount which BPC had held for the Memorial Hall of £6,000.

A total of £636.31 remains for the Memorial Hall, this being the amount raised at Cemetery Carols.
During the year, no funds have been spent on opposing, or mitigating the impact of the NE Thatcham development. This leaves a total of £6,764 for mitigation work (£1,764 from FY24/25 plus £5,000 from FY25/26).

9.2 Bank Reconciliation to the 31st March 2026.

The bank reconciliation to the 31st March, showed a balance in the Community account of £26,099.33 and £23,464.10 in the Community Instant Account for the meadows.

9.3 Payments to be approved:

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

Bank charges (10/1/2026 to 9/3/2026)	£8.50
CPRE (Membership)	£100.00
Office expenses	£215.87
Willis and Ainsworth Ltd (Road grit)	£313.40
Kirby Steel Tubes (IBC stand for Community Orchard)	£300.00
Bibby Commercial Finance Ltd (March bins)	£53.04
Bucklebury Memorial Hall (Rent for March meetings)	£78.85
Staff costs and expenses	£1,224.85

9.4 Bank Reconciliation to the 13th April 2026.

The Clerk circulated a bank reconciliation to the 13th April 2026 which showed a balance of £24,364.94 in the Community Account once all payments and lodgements have cleared. This reconciled back to the last bank statement, dated the 20th March 2026, showing a balance of £26,099.33.
The Community Instant Account (for the meadows) had a balance of £23,464.10 on the 20th March 2026.
Cllr. Teal verified the bank reconciliation against the bank statements.

9.5 To review balances as per most recent statements:

Lloyds Community Account:	20/3/2026	£26,099.33
Lloyds Community Instant Access Account for meadows:	20/3/2026	£23,464.10
Scottish Widows Reserve Account:	1/4/2025	£33,810.52
Scottish Widows Gilroy Account:	1/4/2025	£4,728.25

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

10.1 Play Park.

A quiet period, with virtually no litter has given the opportunity to clean all the signage of dirt and grime which has built up over the years. PT
The timber on the multiplay, which had started to show decay, appears to be stable and will continue to be monitored. The top timber platform will need to be replaced this year.

10.2 Bike track.

There has been little use of the bike track since the last meeting. The grass areas need to be cut. There have been no further incidents of graffiti since the last meeting. PT
The issue of funding for tarmacking the surface remains outstanding. HP

11 **May Day Beacon Lighting Event – Friday 1st May.**

The event has been advertised with posters throughout the parish and on Facebook and the various Whatsapp groups.
Maypole dancing will take place from 6.30pm to 7pm. From 7pm to 9pm, music will be provided by Sophie and school choirs and the Goya Goya band. Bagpipes and the lighting of the beacon will then follow at 9pm. Cllr. Southgate will provide the sound system.
Traditional games of splat the rat, skittles, beat the goalie, a racquet and ball, and a tombola will be set up. The Bucklebury History Society will have a display and the Repair Café may do something.

A Temporary Events Notice (TENS) has been obtained and food and drinks will be available from Go Fish, a burger van, a cake stall (run by Bucklebury PTA), The Bladebone, St. Crispin's apple juice and possibly Tutts Clump Cider.
Parking will take place on the green with marshals. District Cllr. Read has organised for Volker to drop off signs and cones to assist with parking.
The beacon will be roped off. Cllr. Allum will prepare the beacon earlier in the week and it will be lit by John Munro-Ashman.
A generator will be hired in. Chairs will be borrowed and arrangements made to borrow a tent, if the weather forecast looks like rain. The local First Responder will provide first aid cover.

12 **Cemetery.**

Cllr. Teal and Cllr. Willett have produced a schedule of works to stabilise the walls. CW
Suitable builders now need to be found to quote for the work. PT
Cllr. Southgate has spoken to the local blacksmith about a bracing arch between the gate pillars, however there are concerns about the forces involved and the amount of steel which would be required. There is no play left by which to adjust the gates. The blacksmith suggested heavy duty braces to hold the pillars back against the wall, which would be visible, but could be painted to match the gates. An initial cost estimate for the braces would be about £1,500. DS

13 **Highways.**

13.1 Speed Indicator Device (SID)in the Parish.

The year-on-year comparison appears to show a small reduction in speed which may be related to our CSW and SID activities. DS

13.2 Community Speed Watch (CSW).

More recruits have been found and are now completing their training. DS
An upgraded camera, which would only require two volunteers, rather than the current three, would enable CSW to be operated for more hours per week in the parish. GP
It may be possible to share such a device with Bradfield PC.

13.3 WBC Road Safety Team Briefing (GP)

WBC has taken 18 months to produce a policy on Vehicle Activated Signs across the District. The approved sign can be used with multiple different displays making it suitable for different uses including school warning signs and educating about speed more generally. Permanent speed signs have to be owned and managed by WBC (even if funded by parish councils).
Temporary or mobile signs should be moved on a regular basis (every eight weeks) between poles, and can be owned and operated by parishes. It was agreed that BPC request poles be installed on Burdens Heath, Harts Hill Road and Scotland Corner. Two Elan City SIDs will then be purchased which can be moved between the three poles.

13.4 WBC 20mph zone consultation.

To date WBC has not published any results from the 20mph consultations undertaken.
It has been agreed that the best way forwards with 20mph zones in Bucklebury Village and on Broad Lane during school drop off and collection times would be to organize traditional petitions which could be presented to the leader of WBC. DS

13.5 Grit Bins.

A pallet of grit has been delivered and grit bins will be filled by a working party over the summer. DS

14 **Environment.**

14.1 Sustainable Bucklebury.

A meeting is scheduled for the 21st April, when there will be a presentation on the work on biodiversity which has taken place at River Barn.
A Repair Café will be held in All Saints Church Hall on the 25th April.

	Cllr. Loader is chasing up the second grant of £1,000 from Veolia (one was for the Community Orchard and one was for the Repair Café), but to date only £1,000 has been received. Discussions are ongoing about how to fill the IBC at the community orchard for watering.	GL JA
15	**Correspondence**.	
15.1	Length Restriction through Bucklebury Village. A resident has requested that a length restriction be applied in Bucklebury Village to prevent vehicles that are too long attempting to traverse the hump back bridge.	
16	**Reports from Meetings:**	
16.1	Bucklebury Commoners Association. There was a good turnout of Commoners at the recent Commoners Association meeting.	
16.2	Commons Interest Group. Cllr. Pask attended the Commons Interest Group meeting and commented that the effectiveness of the seasonal TROs was discussed. Generally, the view is that prevention is better than having to repair damage, and it is more cost effective to cover more byways with TROs initially, than having to add individual ones later. But there is a view that only byways at high risk of damage should be covered by the seasonal TROs.	
17	**Round Table Comments.**	
17.1	Black Bird Café. The Black Bird Café will be closing for the last time tomorrow, the 14th April 2026. *Post meeting note: The Bladebone has taken over the café and it will reopen soon.*	

The meeting concluded at 9.20pm.

Date of next meetings:

Annual BPC Meeting:

Monday 11th May 2026 at 7pm – The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury.

Annual Parish Assembly:

Friday 8th May 2026 at 7.30pm - Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury.

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