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

Present: Cllr. Dickens (Chairman); Cllr. J. Allum; Cllr. G. Loader; Cllr. G. Pask; Cllr. D. Southgate; Cllr. P. Teal; Cllr. C. Willett; Cllr. G. Woods; District Cllr. C. Read; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).
Four members of the public.

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

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

5 **Chair's Report.**

5.1 Resignation of Cllr. Peter Spours.
Cllr. Spours has tendered his resignation from BPC today. The Clerk will inform WBC and begin the process of finding a new councillor. HP

5.2 Local Government Reorganisation.
Central Government are consulting on the reorganisation of some local councils including the proposed Ridgeway Council. WBC is giving a briefing on the 18th March. It was agreed that Cllr. Pask would respond on behalf of BPC. GP

5.3 Meeting between Parish Council Chairman within the Bucklebury Ward.
At the suggestion of District Cllr. Read, a meeting between the Chairman of the Parish Councils within the Bucklebury Ward was held. There were two items discussed at this meeting: the current position with the NE Thatcham development and the potential devolution of services from WBC as a result of their financial situation.
It is possible that parishes will be asked to take on the roles which WBC does not have a statutory obligation to provide.
In Bucklebury, WBC owns the Recreation Ground, carpark and play arear at the Victory Room. It was questioned whether the Recreation Ground is registered with Fields in Trust.

5.4 Chapel Row Boules Court.
When a group of residents contacted BPC about a boules court on the Green at Chapel Row, BPC questioned whether any form of permission was required and suggested that a way forwards might be to consult with the WBC planning department. A Certificate of Lawfulness was then suggested, but this was withdrawn following the suggestion that full planning permission was required, with scaled plans. The budget for the boules court was £1,500. WBC has now raised biodiversity as an issue.
The possibility of BPC being the applicant, which reduces the cost of the application, was discussed. The Clerk advised that if BPC is to be the applicant, councillors must have sight of and consider the application prior to it being submitted to WBC. TW

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

6	**Clerk's Report.**	
6.1	Annual Parish Assembly Friday 8th May. Thames Valley Police have been asked if they can give an update on Policing in the area at the assembly.	GP
6.2	IT and Email Policy. The Clerk circulated a draft IT and Email Policy prior to the meeting. It was unanimously agreed to adopt this policy.	HP
6.3	Common Clearing Arrangements (Saturday 28th March 2pm). Cakes and biscuits for refreshments after the litter pick will be provided by councillors. Bucklebury Estate will be out collecting up sacks of rubbish and any larger items.	
7	**Planning.**	
7.1	Planning applications on which BPC has been consulted by WBC:	
7.1.1	**26/00312/HOUSE – The Cleffon, Broad Lane.** *Proposed extensions including a front, side, rear and porch extension, raising of the roof to accommodate extra bedrooms, parking area and oil tank to the rear, and 2m front gates/hedges.* Neighbours were consulted on this application and had no issues. It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application subject to there being conditions on lighting.	
7.1.2	**25/02954/FUL – Poachers Paddock, Long Grove.** *Retrospective application for the replacement of agricultural building and extension.* The site is a four-acre plot of land, outside of the settlement boundary. The agricultural buildings have a dirt floor. It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application, subject to there being no overnight accommodation, lighting being for security use only and there being no additional buildings on the site.	
7.2	Planning Decisions made by WBC:	
7.2.1	**25/02057/HOUSE – Red Hill House, Briff Lane.** *Erection of a swimming pool and changing rooms and associated works.* BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **refused** by WBC.	
7.2.2	**26/00001/HOUSE – Middlewood House, Carbinswood Lane.** *The partial demolition, alteration and erection of 2 storey and single storey extensions and associated landscaping.* BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **refused** by WBC.	
7.2.3	**25/01643/CERTE – Fairchilds, Sadgrove Lane.** *Residential garden curtilage in continuous use since 2013.* BPC made **no comments** on this application which has been determined as **lawful** by WBC.	
7.3	Other Planning Matters. A second concrete plinth has been positioned outside Peaches stores, following the installation of one set of courier lockers. The owner of the site has confirmed that the second plinth is for lockers for a different courier. BPC understands that the lockers are not considered to be *de minimus* in planning terms and therefore could well require planning permission. Cllr. Dickens will have a conversation with the owner.	BD
7.4	Adjacent Parish Applications. There are no new applications within 200m of the parish boundary.	
7.5	Local Plan/SP14 (North East Thatcham). The Regeneration and Levelling Up Act stated that Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) would no longer be part of the Local Plan process. This change comes into effect on the 30th June 2026, meaning that new SPDs will not carry any significance. The master	

planning process for SP14 was to result in an SPD, however it is highly unlikely that it can be completed by the end of June.
The Freedom of Information request to WBC on progress with the master planning has resulted in little new information.
It is thought that the developers have been reluctant to engage with WBC on the basis that they know that SPDs will not be recognised after the 30th June. WBC are understood to have only become aware of the deadline in November 2025.
It was agreed that there should be a separate agenda item at the Annual Parish Assembly to update parishioners on the position with SP14. HP

8 **District Councillor's Report.**

District Cllr. Read circulated a report prior to the meeting. This covered:

- The Government consultation on the reorganisation of councils.
- WBC and Veolia are offering residents free soil conditioner from their Padworth recycling plant on 21st and 22nd March.
- A new visitor experience will open at Shaw House with a Tudor Oak Room, Queen Anne Drawing Room, Georgian Parlour and an Edwardian Bedroom. Special exhibitions will be hosted including the "Dressed for Battle" display of armour on loan from Littlecote House and "Dressed for Shaw" with replica costumes. Further improvements will be made to the gardens including an accessible playground. This work has been funded by CIL and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- WBC and Greenham Trust have launched the Community Wellbeing Fund of £110,000 to boost mental health and physical activity initiatives in West Berkshire.
- WBC has approved the budget for 2026/27. Central Government has agreed in principle to WBC's request for borrowing of up to £30 million for the 2026/27 financial year.

8.1 Junction of Long Grove and Broad Lane.

Cllr. Dickens thanked District Cllr. Read for his efforts to get this section of Long Grove resurfaced as it had potholes making it dangerous for pedestrians walking along Broad Lane. The work has now been done.

9 **Finances.**

9.1 Payments to be approved:

The following payments have been paid or set up to be paid:

Bucklebury Community Bus	£500.00
Bucklebury Memorial Hall (Waste 1/7/25 to 31/12/25)	£420.00
Information Commissioners Office (Direct Debit)	£47.00
Penwood Nurseries (Orchard trees and replacement tree)	£681.25
Bucklebury Memorial Hall (Rent for January meetings)	£37.35
Bibby Commercial Finance Ltd (February bins)	£53.04
Bucklebury Memorial Hall (Rent for February meetings)	£53.95
The Victory Room – Bucklebury (rent to 24/11/2025)	£83.70
Staff costs and expenses	£1,224.85

Printing and postage costs for the year of £215.87 and CPRE membership of £100 were also approved.

9.2 Bank Reconciliation to the 9th March 2026.

The Clerk circulated a bank reconciliation to the 9th March 2026 which showed a balance of £28,698.45 in the Community Account once all payments and lodgements have cleared. Cllr. Teal verified the bank reconciliation against the bank statements.

9.3 To review balances as per most recent statements:

Lloyds Community Account:	20/2/2026	£28,698.45
Lloyds Community Instant Access Account for meadows:	20/2/2026	£23,455.10

	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. Since the last meeting there has been virtually no litter to collect, probably due to minimal use given the adverse weather conditions which have caused the grass surface to remain quite muddy. An inspection revealed that one of the junior swing top fixing bolts required tightening which has been carried out.			PT
10.2	Bike track. Litter has been extremely scarce and therefore there are no issues on the bike track. The graffiti sprayed onto the seating shelter reported at the last meeting has now been painted over and to date there has been no reoccurrence. The standing water on the track has now dried up.			PT
11	**Cemetery.**			
11.1	Cemetery Walls and Gate. Cllr. Willett is working on developing a specification for the work (on the wall) which can be used to obtain quotes.			CW
12	**Highways.**			
12.1	Speed Indicator Device in the Parish. A total of 1,392,223 vehicles have now been recorded with SID. SID continues to be deployed in the parish essentially on a daily basis.			DS
12.2	Community Speed Watch (CSW). CSW sessions have continued. Approximately 10% of vehicles are recorded as speeding per session.			DS GP
12.3	WBC 20mph zone consultation. Following the consultation on 20mph speed limits in Bucklebury, it is understood that they are very unlikely to be implemented. Implementation of a 20mph on Broad Lane, between the flashing school signs, during drop off and collection times, and in Bucklebury Village were both discussed. District Cllr. Read suggested that a written, hard copy petition for each proposal be organised, which can be presented to the Chair of WBC.			
12.4	Permanent SID. The WBC policy has been shared amongst councillors. WBC is giving a briefing on 2nd April in the WBC Council Chamber. Cllr. Southgate will write a technical specification for an application.			DS
12.5	Grit Bins. The pallet of salt/grit ordered has not been delivered. The Clerk has chased this up and it should be delivered this week.			HP
12.6	Road to Cold Ash. District Cllr. Read will report the flooding and bank erosion on the Ridge between the southern end of Holly Lane and the parish boundary.			CR
13	**Environment.**			
13.1	Sustainable Bucklebury. At a recent Sustainable Bucklebury meeting the Repair Café and the Community Orchard were both discussed. The Community Orchard has now been planted in the small meadow in Upper Bucklebury. There is a need for an IBC and stand for watering the newly planted trees. It was agreed to spend up to £350 on the IBC and stand. Future meeting dates of the group are now available on the website: https://sustainablebucklebury.org.uk/			JA GL

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

13.2	Update on the Common. Work to thin St. Saviour's wood (to the north of the Avenue) and allow woodland pasture to develop has now been completed. Work has taken place on the south side of the Avenue to the Beenham turn to thin the woodland. The area between the Beenham turn and Chapel Row will be thinned in the Autumn. Concern was raised about the piles of stumps, which still remain, and the fire risk they pose.	
13.3	Beacon Lighting Event in May. Cllr. Woods reported on the plans for the event to be held on Friday 1st May on Chapel Row Green. There will be music, games, food, dancing and lighting of the beacon. There was a discussion about what to do if rain is forecast.	GW
14	**Round Table Comments.**	
14.1	Emergency Plan. The Clerk is attending the HALC Emergency Plan briefing at Shawl House.	HP
14.2	Local Plan Call for Sites. WBC has announced the call for sites for the next Local Plan. Cllr. Pask will attend the briefing on this.	GP
14.3	Litter bins at the top of Briff Lane and in the Fanny's Lane carparks. Both of these bins are emptied by WBC (who are paid by BBOWT for the service), but neither bin appear on the WBC map showing the bin information, or are being emptied on a regular basis. The Clerk has been in contact with WBC about getting the situation remedied.	HP
14.4	Bucklebury Commoners Association. There is a meeting of the Commers scheduled to take place on Tuesday 10th March at 7.30pm in the Victory Room.	

The meeting concluded at 9.10pm.

Date of next meetings:

BPC Meeting:

Monday 13th April 2026 at 7pm – The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury.

Planning Meeting:

Monday 27th April 2026 at 7.15pm – The Meeting Room, The Victory Room, Bucklebury.

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