Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Bucklebury Parish Council held in The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury on Monday 11th May 2026 at 7pm

Present: Cllr. J. Allum; Cllr. B. Dickens; Cllr. G. Loader; Cllr. G. Pask; Cllr. D. Southgate; Cllr. P. Teal; Cllr. C. Willett; Cllr. T. Williams; Cllr. L. Windmill; Cllr. G. Woods; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).
Three members of the public.

1 **Election of Chairman.**
Cllr. Pask proposed that Cllr. Dickens be Chairman of BPC for the coming year. This was seconded by Cllr. Teal and unanimously agreed.
Cllr. Dickens signed his declaration of office as Chairman of BPC.

2 **Election of Vice-Chairman.**
Cllr. Dickens proposed that Cllr. Southgate be Vice Chairman of BPC for the coming year. This was seconded by Cllr. Williams and unanimously agreed.

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

4 **Apologies**.
There were apologies for absence from District Cllr. Read.

5 **Declarations of Interest.**

5.1 Register of Interests.
There were no changes to the register of interests.

5.2 Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items.
Cllr. Woods declared an interest in planning applications 26/00825/HOUSE and 26/00796/HOUSE as the applicant.

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

7 **Vacant Councillor Position.**
WBC has now confirmed that no by-election has been requested for the vacancy on the East Ward. BPC are therefore in a position to co-opt a candidate to fill the position. There was a discussion about potential candidates.

8 **Appointments to Committees.**
The following appointments were unanimously agreed:

Planning Committee:	All members of BPC.
Burial Board:	Cllr. Allum, Cllr. Dickens, Cllr. Southgate and Cllr. Willett.
Meadows and Hockett Field:	Cllr. Dickens, Cllr. Pask and Cllr. Teal.
Sustainable Bucklebury:	Cllr. Loader.
The Oaks:	Cllr. Dickens.

9 **Appointments on External Committees.**
The following appointments to external committees were unanimously agreed:

Bucklebury Memorial Hall:	Cllr. Allum
Common Interest Group:	Cllr. Loader and Cllr. Pask as deputy.
Victory Room:	Cllr. Willett.
Recreation Ground Committee:	Cllr. Pask.
St. Martin's Club:	Cllr. Allum.
West Berkshire Heritage Forum:	Cllr. Southgate.

Chapel Row Patient Participation Panel:	Cllr. Dickens.	

10 **Positions of Responsibility.**

The following positions of responsibility were unanimously agreed:

Fred Dawson Play Park & BMX track:	Cllr. Teal and Cllr. Southgate.
Grit Bins:	Cllr. Southgate.
Coffee mornings / Wellbeing:	Cllr. Pask, Cllr. Southgate, Cllr. Willett.
Public Rights of Way:	Cllr. Allum, Cllr. Woods and Cllr. Williams.
Opposition to NE Thatcham:	Cllr. Dickens, Cllr. Pask, Cllr. Southgate and Cllr. Teal.
Anti Speeding / Highway safety:	Cllr. Southgate and Cllr. Pask.
Website:	Cllr. Southgate.
IT:	Cllr. Loader.

11 **Insurance Arrangements.**

BPC has just renewed the insurance cover for the period 7th May 2026 to the 6th May 2027 using Hiscox through Arthur. J. Gallagher Insurance Brokers. The increase in the premium from last year is approximately £30.00.

12 **Meeting Dates for 2026/27.**

BPC meetings will continue to take place on the 2nd Monday of the month in the Oak Room beginning at 7pm. Planning meetings will continue on the 4th Monday of the month in the meeting room at the Victory Room, starting at 7.15pm.

13 **Chair's Report.**

13.1 Annual Parish Assembly (APA).

Cllr. Dickens commented that at the recent APA, BPC was not well represented. Whilst there was a social event going on in the parish, some parishioners had considered it a priority to attend the APA. He requested that councillors saved the date for the 2027 APA and made every effort to attend.

14 **Clerk's Report.**

14.1 Internal Audit for 2025/26.

The Clerk reported that Erica Tipton will be carrying out the internal audit over the next week.

14.2 Next Edition of The Oaks.

The aim is for the next edition of The Oaks to go out early in June, with the deadline for articles being Sunday 31st May.

It is anticipated that this edition of The Oaks will be in colour and include pictures of the beacon lighting at Chapel Row.

15 **Planning.**

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

15.1.1 **26/00702/FUL – Ashdown House, The Slade.**

Erection of an agricultural barn for the storage of machinery, vehicles, fee and associated materials, together with ancillary workspace and animal welfare facilities.

Whilst the proposed barn does not contain stairs or a first floor, it is very high and contains roof windows. The site is well screened from the road. Permission has already been granted, and work is taking place to convert the double garage at Ashdown House into living accommodation.

The applicant commented that whilst different types of structures had been considered, an oak framed barn was considered to be most suitable. Different frontages for the three open bays are being considered. The barn is needed for equipment to support rewilding of the land, animal shelter and feed storage, as well as garaging. A pond and willow structure are already being constructed and planted.

It was agreed that BPC **objects** to this application on the grounds that it is too large for the land which is to be managed, and given its location within the National Landscape and outside of any settlement boundary. It was agreed that District Cllr. Read be asked to call this application before the Eastern Area Planning Committee should it be up for approval. Any approval for this application must be very tightly tied to agricultural use only.

15.1.2 **26/00825/HOUSE – Red Hill House, Briff Lane.**
Erection of a swimming pool, plant and changing rooms and associated works.
BPC has **no objection** to this application.

15.1.3 **26/00796/HOUSE – Red Hill House, Briff Lane.**
Proposed extension following the permission granted 23/00280/HOUSE and subsequently 25/02263/HOUSE to extend the commencement date with this application. This application is the same as the granted 25/02263/HOUSE which slightly amends the drawings originally permitted.
BPC has **no objection** to this application.

15.1.4 **26/00845/FUL – Picton Farm, The Slade.**
The construction of an agricultural storage Barn and hard standing utilising the existing stable yard access from Holly Lane. Associated fencing, landscape planting and SW drainage.
BPC has **no objection** to this application on the basis that it is tied to agricultural use and only has low level lighting.

15.1.5 **26/00861/HOUSE – 1 Broad Lane.**
Householder extensions and alterations to the existing dwelling. Demolition of existing garage, side and rear extensions to create new kitchen/dining/family area, new pitched roof elements, roof lights, internal reconfiguration and associated works.
It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application.

15.2 Planning Decisions made by WBC:

15.2.1 **26/00912/FUL – Appletrees, Chapel Row.**
Erection of two standalone supported living units, staff facility, elevational external and internal alterations to an existing building and conversion to a self-catering unit.
BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **approved** by the Eastern Area Planning Committee.

15.2.2 **25/02954/FUL – Poachers Paddock, Long Grove.**
Retrospective application for the replacement of agricultural building and extension.
BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **approved retrospectively** by WBC.

15.2.3 **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 Farmhouse which is listed at Grade 2.
BPC had **no objections** to these applications which have been **approved** by WBC.

15.3 Adjacent Parish Applications.

15.3.1 **26/00747/HOUSE – Edenholme, Hungerford Lane (Bradfield Parish).**
Single storey side garage extension plus new front fence and access gates.
It was agreed not to comment on this application.

15.4 NE Thatcham.
The end date for the comments on the drop-in sessions on the master planning for NE Thatcham is the 14th May. Eight questions have been submitted by BPC to WBC. There is need for meaningful public engagement. It was noticeable from the various consultation

sessions, that with each one, slightly more information was being shared. A BPC response was submitted to WBC on the progress on master planning before the deadline.
BPC is also undertaking work to look at how 2,500 houses will fit onto the site. The LVIA (Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) should answer questions about the green area between Upper Bucklebury and NE Thatcham, whether development will only take place up to the 100m contour line, the maximum height of buildings and densities of housing.
It was agreed to spend up to £1,000 on architect's fees to develop visuals on what the site may look like with 2,500 homes. This will be used to augment BPC input to the masterplan.

16 **District Councillor's Report.**

District Cllr. Read gave a report at the APA on Friday 8th May.

17 **Finances.**

17.1 Bank Reconciliation to the 31st March 2026.

A summary bank reconciliation in the format required by the external auditor was reviewed and approved. It showed total income of £50,678.79 and expenditure of £37,112.20. A total balance of £88,446.07 was carried forwards to FY26/27, an increase of £13,021.13 on the previous year.

17.2 Payments to be approved:

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

AJG Community Schemes (Insurance)	£1,461.37
Bank charges (10/3/2026 to 9/4/2026)	£4.25
Hampshire Association of Local Councils (BALC membership)	£540.92
Bucklebury Memorial Hall (Rent for April meetings)	£55.58
Playsafety Limited (RoSPA inspection)	£208.80
Bibby Commercial Finance Ltd (April bins)	£53.04
Wine for APA	£16.00
Staff costs	£1,206.60

17.3 Bank Reconciliation to the 11th May 2026.

The Clerk circulated a bank reconciliation to the 11th May 2026 which showed a balance of £43,318.38 in the Community Account once all payments and lodgements have cleared. This includes the first half of the precept (£22,500) which was received at the end of April. This reconciled back to the last bank statement, dated the 20th April 2026, showing a balance of £24,364.94.
Cllr. Teal verified the bank reconciliation against the bank statements.

17.4 To review balances as per most recent statements:

Lloyds Community Account:	20/4/2026	£24,364.94
Lloyds Community Instant Access Account for meadows:	20/4/2026	£23,474.06
Scottish Widows Reserve Account:	1/4/2026	£34,202.26
Scottish Widows Gilroy Account:	1/4/2026	£4,783.03

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

The event went very well and there were many positive comments. People enjoyed the fact that it was free, low key and a good way to meet up with other parishioners and friends. Thanks were expressed to all those who helped setup, at the event and to clear up afterwards; many hands make light work. In particular those who loaded the beacon, and those who set up and managed the sound system, without which it would have been much harder to put on such a successful event.
The band Goya Goya was superb, and the other musicians all helped to make an excellent evening.
Thanks were extended to the community first responders who provided first aid cover.

The Bladebone had a good evening; the two food vans did well as did St. Crispin's apple juice and cider. The Bucklebury PTA were pleased with their cake stand. People enjoyed having a go at Maypole dancing and the various stalls were popular. The trailer for the stage was great and the sound system made the event.
The general consensus is that the event doesn't want to be too big and this year's event felt about right.

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

19.1 Play Park.

RoSPA made their annual inspection on the 1st May and identified visible decay in one of the uprights on the multiplay unit. Cllr. Southgate and Cllr. Teal have shown that the equipment remains stable, but have put a plan of action to maintain integrity of the support entailing rot treatment and then wrapping the area in a steel sleeve. PT
The entrance gate was identified as a risk due to its failure to close correctly. This needs to be replaced as it can no longer be adjusted.
One of the junior swing seats had split. Cllr. Southgate and Cllr. Teal eventually managed to release the bolts and fit a replacement.
Generally, the RoSPA inspection gave the playpark a green rating.
The play equipment remains popular with children and parents and it is pleasing to see that there has been very little litter found during weekly inspections.
It does not appear that the grass areas have been cut to date and this would benefit from being done.

19.2 Bike track.

The bike track was also inspected on the 1st May and few issues were reported except for wear on the track. The track received a green safety rating. The RoSPA report did note that the seated shelter required cleaning of algae and a paint touch up.
Whilst litter continues to be scarce, it is noted that the grass is in need of a cut. PT
Funding for the tarmacking of the track and how to proceed need to be progressed, as the WBC Members bid needs to be spent by the beginning of November, and contractors are likely to be busy during the summer. HP

20 **Cemetery.**

Cllr. Southgate has received a quote for metal work to pull back the two pillars on either side of the main cemetery gates. The work needs to involve preparation work, the actual metal work and then making good. DS
Cllr. Willett is looking at potential contractors to stabilise and manage the cracks.
There was a discussion on what to do about the trees, the roots of which are causing the damage. Pollarding and felling some of the trees were considered, but no decisions were reached. CW

21 **Highways.**

21.1 Speed Indicator Device (SID)in the Parish.

SID deployment continues across the parish and 1.5 million vehicles have now been recorded. Speeds in excess of 60mph have been recorded at Hillfoot and 70mph on Harts Hill. DS
The year-on-year comparison continues to show a slight reduction in speed, which may be related to SID and CSW activities.
A new recruit at Hillfoot has joined the volunteers.

21.2 Community Speed Watch (CSW).

During CSW sessions, it has been noted that one vehicle has been reported four times; three vehicles three times and twenty-four vehicles have been reported twice. DS GP
More potential recruits from the Berry's Road area showed an interest at the NE Thatcham meeting.

	Ideally, the upgraded CSW camera, which requires less volunteers to operate, is needed in order that CSW activities can be increased. The possibility of sharing with a neighbouring parish needs to be explored.	DS
21.3	Semi-permanent SIDs. It was agreed to investigate two mobile SIDs and three posts (to be mainly funded from the PCC grant) on which they can be installed, at Scotland Corner, on Harts Hill and near the post box on Burdens Heath. Cllr. Southgate is completing the necessary forms.	DS
22	**Environment.**	
22.1	Sustainable Bucklebury. At the May Day beacon lighting event, Sustainable Bucklebury offered a seed planting activity using re-purposed plant pots and soil enricher from the West Berkshire Recycling Centre mixed with peat free compost. There was a meeting on the 21st April when Ben Mitchell from River Barn gave an interesting and informative talk on the importance of rivers in society and how flooding has become more prevalent due to buildings, farming and more recently climate change. The third Repair Café was run on Saturday 25th April at All Saints Church. There was an increase in items for repair and in the number of successful repairs which potentially saved 39 items from landfill. Textile flags and banners have been purchased to raise the profile of the group and events which have been funded by Bucklebury Estate and donations from events. The next Repair Café will be on 11th July, and the next Sustainable Bucklebury meeting is on Tuesday 23rd June in the Oak Room.	
22.2	Mobile Phone Signal. James Read, the Economic Development Officer at WBC, is working with Icon Tower and trying to work towards improved mobile coverage in the parish. Cllr. Williams agreed to look at potential suitable locations for towers.	TW
22.3	Chapel Row Boules Court. Cllr. Williams is having discussions with those attempting to progress this project.	TW
23	**Correspondence**.	
23.1	Bucklebury Primary School - Pond. Bucklebury Primary School is looking to create a pond and has requested any knowledgeable assistance from the community.	
24	**Round Table Comments.**	
24.1	Blackbird Café. The Blackbird Café will be opening as the Diddly Deli under the same management as the Bladebone.	
24.2	PAT testing Device. The PAT testing device needs to be sent off for calibration. This will cost in the region of £60-£70.	
24.3	Annual Parish Assembly (APA). The speakers at the APA were very good and gave very useful content; it was a pity that there were just under 30 in attendance.	
24.4	The Avenue. WBC has started cutting the grass on the Avenue. Whilst it looks a lot better, it is very late for the first cut.	

The meeting concluded at 9.15pm.

Date of next meetings:

BPC Meeting:

Monday 8th June 2026 at 7pm – The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury.

Planning Meeting:

Tuesday 24th May 2026 at 7.15pm - Committee Room at the Victory Room, Bucklebury Village.

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