

Minutes of the meeting of Bucklebury Parish Council
held in The Victory Room, Bucklebury on
Monday 11th March 2024 at 7.45pm

Present: Cllr. B. Dickens (Chairman); Cllr. J. Allum; Cllr. L. Clarke; Cllr. G. Loader; Cllr. M. Morgan; Cllr. D. Southgate; Cllr. P. Teal; Cllr. C. Willett; Cllr. G. Woods; District Cllr. C. Read; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).
One member of the public.

1 **Apologies.**

Apologies of absence were received from Cllr. P. Spours.

2 **Declarations of Interest.**

2.1 **Register of Interests.**

There were no updates to the Register of Interests.

2.2 **Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items.**

There were no other declarations of interest in any agenda items.

3 **Public Session.**

No matters were raised during the public session.

4 **Minutes of meetings of Bucklebury Parish Council.**

The minutes of the meeting of BPC held on Monday 12th February 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by Cllr. Dickens.

5 **Vacant Councillor Position.**

BALC has advised that parishioners must be given 14 working days in which to request a by-election following a new councillor failing to return their declaration of office. A poster advertising the vacancy has been posted on the website and noticeboards.

HP

6 **Chair's Report.**

6.1 **Community Coffee Mornings**

Cllr. Dickens thanked all the councillors and helpers who make the coffee mornings happen. The last coffee morning was held in the main hall, rather than the Oak Room to more comfortably accommodate the numbers now attending. More than forty people attended.

There have been suggestions of asking those who attend to make a donation; however, some attendees donate homemade cakes to be shared and it would be very detrimental to the sessions if this was to stop. It was agreed that a donation pot would be put out.

The Clerk will circulate the approximate costs of the coffee morning to date.

HP

7 **Clerk's Report.**

7.1 **Annual Assembly.**

Cllr. Southgate has arranged for Phil Smither, the antiquities officer at WBC to speak on local finds at the Annual Assembly on Friday 10th May.

7.2 **Email addresses.**

BPC email addresses will be created for all councillors with the exception of Cllr. Clarke, by the end of the March. The website will then be updated with the BPC email addresses. There was a discussion about the possibility of adding photographs of councillors to the website.

7.3 **Dog bin at the Memorial Hall.**

BPC has been paying £336.96 a year, excluding VAT to have the dog bin at the Memorial Hall emptied. The company have quoted £338 to empty the dog bin and a single litter bin in the play area, with a 10% discount for a one off payment in advance.

It was agreed that BPC would take on a year's contract, but would like a quote for the second play area bin to be included.

Signed

Date

2024/12

7.4	<p><u>Small Meadow.</u> The quote for the small meadow includes litter picking and 16 cuts of the grass. It was agreed to request a revised quote for 12 cuts and no litter picking.</p>	HP
7.5	<p><u>Litter on Harts Hill Road.</u> District Cllr. Read agreed to follow up on the issue of litter which is accumulating on Harts Hill Road with WBC.</p>	CR
8	<p><u>Planning.</u></p>	
8.1	<p><u>Planning applications on which BPC has been consulted by WBC:</u></p>	
8.1.1	<p>24/00279/HOUSE – Rumbles Cottage, Byles Green. <i>Proposed replacement of conservatory with two storey extension and addition of two dormer windows.</i></p>	
	<p>It was unanimously agreed that BPC has no objection to this application.</p>	
8.2	<p><u>Planning Decisions made by WBC:</u> No planning decisions have been made.</p>	
8.3	<p><u>Adjacent Parish Applications.</u> There are no new planning applications within 200m of the parish boundary.</p>	
8.4	<p><u>Update on the Local Plan.</u> The initial hearing is scheduled to take place on the 8th and 9th May and the following week. BPC has funding for and is employing two experienced specialists to represent them (and a large part of the parish) at the hearing. The objections to the draft Local Plan are cogent and evidence based. There were approximately 800 letters of objection to the Regulation 19 consultation, which are filed in alphabetical order. However, Bucklebury’s objection is not filed under ‘Bucklebury’, but under ‘Andrew Black’ the consultant. The Planning Inspector is aware of this and the programme manager will ensure the issue is corrected. Representatives of BPC and District Cllr. Read met with Andrew Black to get his views on the stake holder responses, to discuss progress with the BPC response to matters due on the 22nd March and to consider who will say what in front of the Planning Inspector. The Planning Inspector is understood to be making an unannounced visit to the NE Thatcham site with an annotated OS map showing the critical ecological points, produced by Paul Gorriup. Following the hearing, the Planning Inspector will deliberate before making his recommendations.</p>	
9	<p><u>District Council Business.</u> It was noted that an older resident tripped in a pothole in Bucklebury Village and was lightly injured. District Cllr. Read commented that the hydraulic action caused by levels of water on the roads is playing havoc with the surface. In January and February 2024, 1,881 potholes were reported across West Berkshire. Approximately £8.5million has been set aside for road and footpath repairs next year. It was noted that if there is an underspend of 50% on repairs each year, the conditions will get worse and worse. District Cllr. Read reported that repairs are carried out on a national policy risk-based approach. It was questioned how this focused on different road users (two and four wheels). Defects are assessed and given a priority; those with the highest priority should be fixed within 72 hours. The amount of resurfacing carried out each year is being reduced, even though vehicles are getting larger and heavier, and therefore causing increased wear on the roads. WBC is moving towards an AI approach to identifying weaknesses in the surface. The highways budget includes a small amount of money for cleansing of road signs. Longitudinal cracks are now appearing in roads. It was questioned why some preventative work is not being carried out.</p>	

District Cllr. Read asked that reference numbers for reported potholes are reported to him so that he can follow up on them.

10

Finances.

10.1.1 **Payments to be authorised by Councillors:**

Bucklebury Memorial Hall	£101.93	Rent for coffee mornings, common clearing and NE Thatcham meeting for January, February & March 2024.
The Alpha Xperience	£547.00	900 copies of The Oaks (24 pages).
Tactical Facilities Management Ltd	£40.80	Weekly emptying of 2 dog bins for January 2024.
Andrew Black Consulting	£2,640.00	NE Thatcham matters statement, public meeting and 50% of hearing fee.
Expenses, salaries, pensions, PAYE	£1,316.30	Expenses including replacement wood and screws for the play park, postage and printing for FY23/24.

10.2 **To review current balances.**

Lloyds Current Account balance after all cheques cleared and lodgements received:	£21,540.30	
Lloyds Current Account:	£28,231.89	20 th February 2024
Lloyds Business Instant Account for meadows:	£32,702.45	20 th February 2024
Scottish Widows Reserve Account:	£32,868.17	4 th April 2023
Scottish Widows Gilroy Account:	£4,596.47	4 th April 2023

11 **Common Clearing – Saturday 23rd March.**

Six councillors will be attending Common Clearing and collecting litter.
 Cllr. Clarke, Cllr. Dickens, Cllr. Woods, Cllr. Southgate and Cllr. Allum’s daughter will make cakes/biscuits for the event.
 Cllr. Woods will serve refreshments after the event.

12 **D-Day Anniversary Event.**

Various ideas for a beacon lighting event on the Hockett Field to mark the 80th D-Day anniversary were discussed. The official D-Day 80 reading will be read.
 It was agreed that the beacon quote from Walcot would be accepted and enquiries made about local installation.

BD
 GW
 JA
 DS

13 **Cemetery and Chapel.**

13.1 **Cemetery Working Party.**

Thanks were extended to all councillors and parishioners who helped on a very successful Cemetery working party.

13.2 **Maintenance Contract.**

Maintenance quotes for the Cemetery run from March to November each year and include cutting the grass and collecting the leaves.
 A quote for £2,084.10 has been received for 2024, with a 5% increase for 2025 and 2026.
 It was resolved to accept the quote for one year only, to write a grounds maintenance specification and then obtain three quotes in the Autumn for 2025.

HP
 JA
 DS

14 **Hockett Field.**

Following small motor bikes being used on the path around Hockett field leaving marks in the surface, it was agreed that signage should be installed specifically identifying unpermitted uses of the field. Cllr. Southgate and the Clerk will consider wording for a sign.

DS
 HP

15 **Bus Shelters**

15.1 **Repairs to Chapel Row Bus Shelter.**

Signed

Date
 2024/14

	Two quotes have been requested for cutting back the vegetation overhanging the Chapel Row bus shelter and replacing the felt on the roof. It was agreed to spend a maximum of £1,000 on the work.	HP
15.2	<u>Bus Shelter cleaning.</u> A quote has been requested for the cleaning of both the Chapel Row and Upper Bucklebury bus shelters on a monthly and quarterly basis. These quotes will be considered at the April BPC meeting.	HP
16	<u>Fred Dawson Play area and BMX Track.</u> Cllr. Southgate and Cllr. Teal have moved the bench away from the fence (this was identified as an issue in the RoSPA inspection last year). The wooden picnic bench has been restored and returned to the play area. The surface of the BMX track is being softened by the heavy rain. As a result, it is very vulnerable to damage and particularly from electric buggies which have been monitored using the track. Large stones from the foundation layers are beginning to protrude through the top surface and work needs to be carried out. The Clerk will forward details of the contractor previously used to repair the surface to Cllr. Teal.	
17	<u>Highways.</u>	
17.1	<u>Vehicle Activated Signs (VASs)</u> Both of the VAS (located in Chapel Row and Broad Lane) have now been repaired, having been broken for a number of years.	
17.2	<u>Thames Valley Police Community Speed Watch (CSW).</u> Gareth Dowding (WBC) is meeting with Cllr. Southgate to review the locations for CSW signage, which has to be placed on all roads into the parish. WBC carried out CSW in Chapel Row for an hour and recorded 16 vehicles exceeding ACPO who will be reported to the police. The Thames Valley Police CSW kit requires three volunteers, however there is a piece of equipment which records the required evidence but, it costs approximately £4,000.	
17.3	<u>Speed Competition Posters.</u> The Clerk has the images and will order ten Correx signs.	HP
18	<u>Environment.</u>	
18.1	<u>Works on the Common.</u> Funding for the planned work has not yet come through. The felling on Fence's Wood should be completed on Friday, and it is hoped to start replanting on Saturday with mainly oak. On the land to the north of Burdens Heath (west of Fanny's Lane), the piles of removed birch and gorse have been rolled into bunds on the sides of the area and are surprisingly well camouflaged.	
18.2	<u>Peaches Noticeboard.</u> The frame to support the noticeboard is being fabricated by Walcot and will be galvanised.	
19	<u>Correspondence.</u>	
19.1	<u>Bucklebury Tennis Club.</u> It was resolved to make a donation of £300 to Bucklebury Tennis Club for the coaching of Bucklebury Primary School pupils.	
19.2	<u>Bucklebury Guides and Rangers.</u> It was resolved to make a donation of £300 to Bucklebury Guides and Rangers for additional equipment.	
20	<u>Reports.</u>	
20.1	<u>Victory Room AGM.</u> The Victory Room is being well utilised and is currently making a small profit which can be used for future work on the facility.	

Signed

Date
2024/15

21 **Round Table Comments.**

21.1 **Traffic at St. Finnian's School.**

Cllr. Allum raised concern about the levels of traffic on the Ridge outside St. Finnian's School at school drop off and collection time. The area around the school becomes completely clogged up with vehicles and is very dangerous.

21.2 **A34 Litter.**

Litter levels on sides of the A34 are an atrocity. It was noted that National Highways are responsible for the A34 rather than WBC.

The meeting concluded at 9.50pm.

Date of next meetings:

Planning meeting: Monday 25th March 2024 at 7.45pm – The Victory Room.

BPC meeting: Monday 8th April 2024 at 7.45pm – The Victory Room.

Common Clearing: Saturday 23rd March, 2pm at the Memorial Hall

Signed

Date

2024/16