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

At the beginning of the meeting, there was a minutes silence to remember the late Jeremy Brooke (former councillor and chairman of BPC) and the late Mike James (former BPC councillor), both who have died since the last BPC meeting.

Present: Cllr. B. Dickens (Chairman); Cllr. J. Allum; Cllr. G. Loader; Cllr. M. Morgan; Cllr. G. Pask; Cllr. D. Southgate; Cllr. P. Spours; Cllr. P. Teal; Cllr. C. Willett; Cllr. G. Woods; District Cllr. Read; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).
Two members of the public were present.

1 **Apologies.**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Windmill.

2 **Declarations of Interest.**

2.1 Register of Interests.

The Clerk will be updating the register of interests on the website. HP

2.2 Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items.

There were no declarations of interest in any agenda items.

3 **Public Session.**

No issues were raised during the public session.

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

The minutes of the meeting of BPC held on Monday 14th October 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

5 **Chair's Report.**

5.1 Olivia Bailey MP meeting.

An itinerary around the access points of SP17 (the NE Thatcham site) has been agreed for the meeting on Saturday 23rd November. It had been hoped to use the Community Bus, but it is unavailable. The aim will be to concentrate on pointing out the impact on ecology, traffic/transport and erosion of the strategic gap.

5.2 WBC Waste Management Consultation.

Comments couldn't be submitted on behalf of BPC, because comments were submitted as individuals and two sets of responses could not be made from the same computer system.

5.3 Remote Meetings and Proxy Voting.

It was agreed that expenditure on the necessary equipment to hold hybrid meetings for small parish councils was inappropriate use of public funds. It was acknowledged that hybrid meetings give more opportunity for public engagement.
It was noted that remote meetings worked during COVID, but these were entirely remote and not hybrid meetings.

5.4 December BPC Meeting.

The December BPC meeting will start at 7.30pm to allow for seasonal refreshments after the meeting. Cllr. Woods will provide mince pies and Cllr. Morgan mulled wine. GW MM

5.5 Berkshire Fire and Rescue Safe and Wellbeing Technician's Visit.

A safe and wellbeing technician has agreed to come to a coffee morning and give a short talk on home safety and wellbeing. The technicians are able to make home visits and advise on home safety.

6 **Clerk's Report.**

6.1 Replacement laptop.

It was agreed that the Clerk could purchase a new BPC to the maximum value of £450 excluding VAT. HP

6.2 Grant to Bucklebury Bus.
A number of questions were raised which will be sent to the Community Bus trustees.

6.3 LGA Pay award.
Agreement has been reached by the LGA, on the pay increase for Clerks from the 1st April 2024 to the 31st March 2025. It was agreed that this increase should be applied to the Clerk's salary.

6.4 Parish Plan Funds.
The Clerk has been advised of Parish Plan funds which whilst limited are still available from WBC. Resurfacing the bike track may be eligible for some of this funding with match funding from BPC. HP PT

7 **Planning.**

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

7.1.1 **24/02122/HOUSE – Eliezer Cottage, Zin Zan.**
Conversion of garden room into home office.
It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application subject to it remaining ancillary to Eliezer Cottage and not being rented out.

7.1.2 **24/02084/HOUSE – 57 Broad Lane.**
Proposed ground and first floor extension.
It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application.

7.1.3 **24/02085/HOUSE – Hilltop Cottage, Hopgood's Green.**
Single storey kitchen extension.
Whilst BPC agreed **no objection** to this application, concern was raised about light spill in the AONB and whether a bat survey is required.

7.1.4 **24/01964/LBC – Briar Cottage, Byles Green.**
Replace rear kitchen window with a French window; replace kitchen door and boot room door and replace four single glazed windows in kitchen/utility room with double glazed windows (retrospective for the four single glazed windows in the kitchen and the kitchen door).
It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application.

7.2 Planning Decisions made by WBC:

7.2.1 **24/01554/HOUSE – Kingsmead (Stanford Dingley Parish).**
Two storey side extension with internal alterations to create additional master bedroom.
BPC made **no comment** on this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

7.2.2 **24/01304/HOUSE – Rose Cottage, Kiff Green (Woolhampton Parish).**
Replacement of existing section of a thatched roof and swept dormers with plain tiles to match remaining roof.
BPC made **no comment** on this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

7.2.3 **24/01725/LBC – Kiff Green Farm (Woolhampton Parish).**
Replacement window.
BPC made **no comment** on this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

7.2.4 **24/01897/HOUSE – Woodside, Long Grove.**
Removal of existing goat shed and store area. Formation of new goat shed, store room and small tractor shed.
BPC had **no objection** to this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

7.2.5 **24/01870/HOUSE – Bucklebury House.**
Construction of an outbuilding to accommodate a machinery store and home office.
BPC **objected** to this application which has been **withdrawn.**

7.2.6 **24/01519/FUL – Hilliers, The Avenue.**
Installation of a small ground mounted solar photovoltaic system and a paddle court, 45 panels. Both to be situated within the ground of the domestic residence, Hilliers, on a former horse training area. The application area, including access routes and cable runs is 0.198 hectares.

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

7.3 Adjacent Parish Applications.

There have been no applications submitted within 200m of the parish boundary.

7.4 Update on the Local Plan.

Cllr. Dickens has met with Cllr. Owen Jeffery, the Deputy Leader of Thatcham Town Council (TTC) about the possibility of seeking a King's Counsel (KC) opinion on the Local Plan, prior to a potential Judicial Review (JR). District Cllr. Read has suggested that TTC may be willing to pay 50% of the cost of a KC opinion. Cllr. Dickens will be meeting with representatives of Cold Ash Parish Council on Friday; it is understood they are considering seeking a KC opinion. BD

8 **District Councillor's Report.**

District Cllr. Read circulated a report prior to the meeting. The key points are:

- Joseph Holmes has been appointed as interim CEO following the departure of Nigel Lynn.
- The Memorial Hall Committee has been awarded a CIL bid of £6,000 towards improving disabled access and upgrading the toilet facilities.
- WBC and Greenham Trust have collaborated in the 'Let's Get Mindful' scheme which is to support voluntary organisations working to improve mental health and wellbeing across West Berkshire.
- WBC continues to support households struggling to meet essential housing costs through the Household Support Fund.
- The WBC annual Giving Tree campaign, run as part of the White Ribbon Campaign, to bring Christmas to those in need who are suffering from domestic abuse will be live from the 4th November to the 6th December.
- The next Community Forum will take place at 6.30pm on Tuesday 19th November on flood prevention and winter preparedness in West Berkshire.
- Results on the latest ward questionnaire on WBC waste services, potholes and gulleys are in.

9 **Finances.**

9.1 Payments to be authorised by Councillors:

Westcot Ltd	£330.00	Peaches noticeboard frame.
The Alpha Xperience	£435.00	900 Copies of The Oaks.
Bibby Commercial Finance Ltd	£40.80	Dog waste bin emptying (October).
Postal expenses	£34.00	April '24 to November '24.
West Berkshire Heritage Forum	£50.00	Agreed at October meeting.
Greenham Trust Ltd	£100.00	Donation for NWN Over 80's Parcel fund.
Salaries, pension & PAYE/NI	£1,093.84	For October '24.

9.2 To review current balances.

Lloyds Current Account balance after all cheques cleared and lodgements received:	£26,555.77	
Lloyds Current Account:	£31,722.49	18th October 2024
Lloyds Business Instant Account for meadows:	£32,966.24	18th October 2024
Scottish Widows Reserve Account:	£33,313.35	8th April 2024
Scottish Widows Gilroy Account:	£4,658.72	8th April 2024

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

It was noted that two adults had been seen using electric bikes on the pump track. Sadly this resulted in damage to the surface.

11	**Cemetery.** Cemetery Carols - Monday 23rd December. Arrangements for Cemetery Carols are in hand. Cemetery Carols Charity. It was agreed that funds raised at Cemetery Carols would be for Georgina Cardy's transport service. Cemetery Working Party. There will be a Cemetery working party on Saturday 16th November.	
12	**Meadows.** On the 29th October, Cllr. Dickens, Cllr. Teal, Cllr. Pask and the Clerk walked around the meadows and identified a number of dead trees and other tree work. Cllr. Pask has contacted four tree surgeons to quote for the work (to involve felling the hollow ash, reducing the crown on the oak between the kissing gate and the main gate between the largest two meadows, and removing a number of dead ash and elms). A separate quote has been requested to remove the holly under the large oaks between the small and large meadows. In addition, he will request advisory quotes to tidy up the trees on the eastern boundary of the big meadow which belong to Mortons Lane properties. Letters will be sent to the property owners notifying them of the recommended work and reminding them of their liability as owners of the trees.	GP
	One of the tree surgeons suggested fencing off the corner underneath the split oak belonging to Orchard Gate to reduce BPC's liability. Cllr. Pask has carried out work to reinforce each of the kissing gates. Plastic mesh has been put on the bottom of the gates between the large and small meadows to stop dogs from running underneath. Funding was agreed for a spring for the kissing gate to keep it shut.	GP
	On the 20th November (subsequently changed to the 27th November), Cllr. Pask and the Clerk will walk round the meadows with two representatives of the West Berkshire Countryside Society to discuss work which they can complete during two volunteer days, one in December and one in January.	
13	**Highways.**	
13.1	Speed Indicator Device (SID). The SID continues to be well deployed across the parish. Data from the deployments continues to be shared with WBC and Thames Valley Police. Residents of Chapel Row would like a permanent Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) at Scotland Corner as traffic comes into Chapel Row from across the Common. A solar powered VAS costs in the order of £6,000. There are other locations in the parish where a VAS would be beneficial. It was noted that in several locations, successful businesses cause parking issues (both in Chapel Row and Upper Bucklebury). There are mixed views from residents on having designated parking spaces in the road, versus vehicles parked on pavements, forcing any pedestrians into the road.	
13.2	Thames Valley Police (TVP) Community Speed Watch (CSW). Cllr. Southgate is working on the paperwork which needs to be completed in order to operate CSW.	DS
14	**Environment.**	
14.1	Sustainable Bucklebury. Approximately 20 people attended a meeting in mid October. Initial projects include getting the website up and running and producing a local map of where things can be recycled.	GL
	The Friends of Bucklebury School are interested in being involved in the group. Projects being explored included solar water heating (which has quicker returns than solar power) and holding repair cafes possibly on a quarterly basis. It is critical that repair cafes	

	are set up correctly in order for them to operate well. Electrical equipment bought for repair should be PAT tested before and after repair. The gadget to PAT test equipment costs in the region of £550.	
14.2	Works on the Common. A meeting has been proposed with Alex Cruickshank, Alasdair Jones Perrott, Cllr. Dickens, Cllr. Teal and Cllr. Allum to talk over what's happened on the common and the future plans. It is planned to install the leaky dams in the cleared gulleys in December. The thinning of the birch between Briff Lane and Fanny's Lane is nearly complete. Big haul roads have been created at Ramsbury Corner making some of the rights of way difficult to use. The area between Bucklethwaite and Scotland Corner has been cleared. Work is due to start on the other side of the road imminently. Requests have been made for an Environmental Impact Assessment.	
14.3	VE Day 80 (8th May 2025). Cllr. Allum reported that he has organised for the Three Rivers Choir, the Kennet Swing Band and a male voice choir to attend the VE Day 80 celebrations in Bucklebury. There is interest in producing a VE Day 80 special edition of The Oaks (similar to D Day80 edition). This idea was agreed although there were questions over distribution.	GW
15	**Correspondence.**	
15.1	Sundew Ecology Report on Grazing on Bucklebury Common. There was confusion about a proposal document, sent to WBC for consultation, on cattle grazing on the common using fenceless grazing. Whilst councillors and parishioners had been given the impression that fenceless grazing was 100% safe, the document puts this into question by proposing a 40mph speed limit on roads across the Common. Cattle are needed to manage the Common moving forwards. Cllr. Pask has spoken to Willie Hartley Russell about the document, and suggested temporary fencing as a possibility. WBC are currently reviewing the proposal.	
16	**Reports from any other meetings.**	
16.1	District Parish Conference – 29th October. At the District Parish Conference, parishes were strongly encouraged to contribute to WBC in order to get more than the statutory minimum level of service in a number of areas, particularly verge cutting, gulley cleaning, highway sign cleaning and libraries.	
17	**Round Table Comments.**	
17.1	Defib Training. The Clerk was reminded about organising defibrillator training for councillors and parishioners.	HP
17.2	Tree planting for Erica Tipton. The tree planting on the Recreation Ground to mark Erica's 50 years of service to the community will take place on Sunday 24th November.	
17.3	Woodland Trust. Cllr. Allum reported that he is now able to add trees to the Ancient Tree Inventory. He is trying to survey as many ancient trees in Bucklebury as he can.	
17.4	Cottage Inn Fireworks. The November 5th fireworks at the Cottage Inn caused parking carnage again, with very restricted width for vehicles to pass through. This needs to be addressed in future years. It was agreed that it should be raised at the July BPC meeting and discussions had in advance to try and ease the situation.	

17.5	Grit Bins. Cllr. Southgate will distribute grit to all of the grit bins, however, it needs to be delivered to a central point. Cllr. Woods offered to have the grit delivered to her. The Clerk will inspect the last survey list and order grit.	DS HP
17.6	Permitted path between Bucklebury Village and Walnut Tree Cottages. The Clerk will send the map with the possible permitted paths on them to the landowners.	HP

The meeting concluded at 10.20pm.

Date of next meetings:

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

BPC meeting: Monday 9th December 2024 at 7.30pm – The Oak Room, Memorial Hall.

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