

Minutes of the meeting of Bucklebury Parish Council  
held in The Victory Room, Bucklebury on  
Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 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. Spours; Cllr. P. Teal; Cllr. C. Willett; Cllr. G. Woods; District Cllr. C. Read; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).

Two members of the public, including the agent for application 23/02773/HOUSE.

1 **Apologies.**

No apologies of absence were received.

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.**

Cllr. Woods declared an interest in planning application 23/02760/CERTE as the applicant.

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

3 **Public Session.**

No items were raised during the public session.

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

The minutes of the meeting of BPC held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by Cllr. Dickens.

5 **Vacant Councillor Position.**

The vacancy which arose on the west ward following the resignation of Chris Austin has been advertised since 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023. WBC has not received any requests for a by-election, so BPC may co-opt a new councillor.

5.1 **Co-option.**

It was resolved that Sarah Lewington be co-opted on to BPC to represent the west ward. *(Note that on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January, she tendered her resignation and no longer wishes to pursue the position).*

6 **Chair's Report.**

6.1 **Website.**

Cllr. Dickens requested that those councillors who don't have any contact information on the website advise the Clerk of the email address and/or the phone number they would prefer to have advertised.

7 **Clerk's Report.**

7.1 **Annual Parish Assembly.**

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Assembly would be held on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May in the Victory Room.

Various possibilities for speakers were discussed and it was agreed that someone from the West Berks Heritage Forum or from WBC with a knowledge of local antiquities and finds be invited to speak.

7.2 **Peaches Noticeboard.**

A parishioner has refurbished the noticeboard and it is awaiting collection from his garage.

Cllr. Allum is expecting a quote for steel posts to mount the notice board. Cllr. Woods offered to store the refurbished noticeboard until installation.

It was agreed that the carpark in front of Peaches is the best location for it. The Clerk will contact Hash Shingadia and check what permission might be required to reinstall it.

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7.3 E-mail.  
The Clerk contacted other clerks across West Berkshire parishes and enquired about how they were managing their councillors' email accounts. The answers were wide ranging from larger councils using Microsoft to smaller councils who hadn't necessarily grasped the issues involved. It was agreed that BPC would spend up to £500 for a Microsoft email account license for each councillor, but that this would be implemented in a number of phases.

7.4 Flooding in Bucklebury Village following 4mm of rain on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024.  
Piers Allison, the flood warden, reported that during the continued rain of Thursday evening, it became evident that the Village was exposed to flooding from the rain fall on the field to the west of Waven. Water falling on this field should run into the roadside gullies by the water pumping station and, using the pipe network, find its way into the ditch opposite The Old Foundry, Burnside, Greenmeads and Riverside Cottages. However, if the pipe work is blocked or overwhelmed, flooding occurs on the road and in the worst case puts properties at risk. On Thursday evening, a tractor and tanker were called in to remove some of the water from this area simultaneously with the rain easing off and thus prevented flooding of any homes. WBC have been asked to clean out the gullies and all of the pipework in the Village. A new soak-a-way ditch running along the northern edge of the field for about 150m west of the Waven is being discussed to remove this exposure.  
During the rain, it was noted that water in the River Pang didn't spill into the flood alleviation channel until the river had reached 79cm deep; it should spill over when the river is 42cm deep. A working party has been organised to rectify this issue.

8 Planning.

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

8.1.1 **23/02773/HOUSE – Glencoe, Chapel Row.**

*Erection of single storey rear extension and external alterations to existing dwelling.*

*Erection of single storey detached garage.*

Whilst there was some concern about the removal of the false gables and the increase in glazing to the rear, BPC agreed to **no objection** to this application.

8.1.2 **23/02760/CERTE – Red Hill House.**

*Continued use of land as garden land.*

BPC has **no objection** to this application.

8.1.3 **23/02835/HOUSE – 7 Mortons Lane.**

*Proposed single storey rear extension.*

BPC unanimously agreed to **no objection** to this application.

8.2 Planning Decisions made by WBC:

8.2.1 **23/01507/FUL – Westrop Farm, The Ridge.**

*Proposed solar array to serve various properties at Westrop Farm.*

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

8.2.2 **23/02008/HOUSE – Uplands, Burdens Heath.**

*Single storey rear extension.*

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

8.2.3 **23/02276/HOUSE – 71 Roundfield.**

*Two storey front and single storey rear extension.*

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

8.2.4 **23/02523/HOUSE – Hyakinthos, Upper Bucklebury.**

*Proposed single storey rear extension, single storey side extension and associated alterations.*

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

8.3 Adjacent Parish Applications.

There are no new planning applications within 200m of the parish boundary.

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8.4 Update on the Local Plan.

The draft Local Plan has now been submitted to the inspector for Public Enquiry. WBC tried to withdraw the Plan, but this was blocked by the minister. It is currently unclear what WBC's plan is, despite questions being asked.

BPC must be ready to oppose the plan and specifically the NE Thatcham component.

Cllr. Spours and Cllr. Dickens have spoken to Andrew Black (planning consultant) who has drawn up a plan and costing for his expected work of £8,282 including transport, ecology and VAT. This expenditure was approved. The hearing is expected to take place in the middle of May.

Cllr. Dickens has spoken to the Leader of Thatcham Town Council to reenergise the affected parishes working together. WBC is due to engage with Counsel on the 12<sup>th</sup> January and Cllr. Vickers, the WBC portfolio holder for planning, will subsequently brief Cllr. Read and BPC (*This took place on 19<sup>th</sup> January*).

BPC will organise a public meeting (*now scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> February*) to inform parishioners on progress and the implications of the possible outcomes: that the plan is approved as sound, the plan needs minor modification (with recommended modifications), that the plan is legally unsound and would therefore require WBC to go back to Regulation 18 and a call for sites.

It was noted that a lot of small development sites, "windfall sites" are not included in the Local Plan.

9 District Council Business.

District Cllr. Read encouraged anyone who had been the victim of flooding or close to being flooded to report it to WBC under the "Report a Problem" page on their website. The consultations ongoing on budget cuts for the next financial year are open until Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January.

Good progress has generally been made in delivering WBC's Strategy, but improvement is needed on delivering on-street EV charging points, time taken to handle new housing benefit claims and the number of households actively fostering children and young people.

The WB Rural England Prosperity Fund business grant scheme is now live, offering support to small, local, rural businesses with capital initiatives.

The next District Parish Conference will be held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January from 2pm to 4.30pm in Shaw House. It will also be a hybrid meeting.

Additional grants are available for those suffering from Winter challenges.

The planning application for the first phase of the improvements to Newbury Wharf has been submitted to the planning department.

Community Ownership Fund grants are available to support community groups taking over and running community assets for the community.

10 Finances.

10.1 Payments to be authorised by Councillors:

Tactical Facilities Management Ltd	£32.64	Weekly emptying of 2 dog bins (December).
C. R. Landscapes	£4,028.10	Cemetery and meadows maintenance during 2023.
The Victory Room – Bucklebury	£62.10	Rent for meetings – September to December 2023.
Connecting Communities in Berkshire	£42.00	Membership of CCB
Bucklebury Memorial Hall	£3,000.00	Donation to help with expense of new boiler.
Bucklebury Community Bus	£500.00	Donation.

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West Berks Foodbank	£369.76	Donations collected at Cemetery Carols for the Foodbank.
Salaries, expenses, pensions, PAYE	£1,746.49	Expenses including mulled wine for Cemetery carols and refurbishment of the Peaches noticeboard. Salaries include backpay to the 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023.

10.2 To review current balances.

Lloyds Current Account balance after all cheques cleared and lodgements received:	£28,406.88	
Lloyds Current Account:	£39,674.16	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Lloyds Business Instant Account for meadows:	£32,632.67	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Scottish Widows Reserve Account:	£32,868.17	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
Scottish Widows Gilroy Account:	£4,596.47	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2023

10.3 Budget for FY24/25.

With the addition of £500 for councillor email, it was resolved to approve the budget for FY24/25.

10.4 Precept for FY24/25.

The Clerk reported that the precept request and tax base have not been received from WBC; they are expected at the beginning of next week (normally parishes receive them in the middle of December).

The approved budget includes an expenditure of £34,951.02 regular expenditure (excluding the meadows). The precept for the current year was £45,000 which comprised of funds to cover general expenditure of £30,000 plus an additional £15,000 for opposing the Local Plan. It was agreed that the precept for the next financial year (FY24/25) would be **£38,000**. The increase of £8,000 comprises of 10% inflation and £5,000 for any grass cutting services BPC decides to take on as a result of the proposed cuts to grass cutting by WBC.

11 Cemetery and Chapel.

11.1 Cemetery Carols.

Cemetery Carols was a very successful event once again, raising just under £370 for the West Berks Foodbank after expenses.

11.2 Update on the Cemetery.

A parishioner continues to work on the mapping and correlation of grave plots with the burial register. Steady progress has been made and half of the old Cemetery has now essentially been completed. A number of grave markers have been found completely hidden by overgrown rhododendrons, which have been cut back. There has been a discussion about how to dispose of the debris.

It was agreed that it would be burnt during a Cemetery working party which the Clerk will organise, preferably for a Saturday in February.

BPC agreed to pay for stump killer to kill off the cut back rhododendrons.

12 D-Day Anniversary.

A quote for just under £2,000, for fabrication and installation of a beacon, has been obtained from the local blacksmith.

Cllr. Allum is obtaining a second quote for a beacon.

It was agreed that up to £2,500 could be spent on the fabrication and installation of a beacon to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

The location of the beacon is still to be determined. The Events Committee are meeting in a few weeks to discuss the plans for the anniversary weekend.

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Signed .....

Date .....

2024/4

13	<b><u>Fred Dawson Play area and BMX Track.</u></b> The play area and BMX track have hardly been used during the bad weather. The CCTV sign has been removed. The Clerk will order two replacement CCTV signs, constructed of aluminium or steel.	HP
14	<b><u>Highways.</u></b>	
14.1	<b><u>Speed Competition Posters.</u></b> There was no update on printing of the winning posters onto Correx board.	DS
14.2	<b><u>Use of SID in the Parish.</u></b> Approximately 220,000 vehicle speeds have now been captured.	
14.3	<b><u>Thames Valley Police Community Speed Watch (CSW).</u></b> There has been no progress with the Thames Valley Police CSW.	
14.4	<b><u>20mph Zones in the Parish.</u></b> The request for any 20mph zones in the parish is awaiting the outcome of the trial 20mph zone in Theale.	
15	<b><u>Environment.</u></b>	
15.1	<b><u>Works on the Common.</u></b> Cllr. Allum will circulate the Draft Terms of Reference for the Bucklebury Common Interest Group which is being proposed as a replacement for the Bucklebury Commons Advisory Committee. Cllr. Allum will be part of the group, representing Bucklebury Commoners Association. A councillor, to represent BPC, will be invited to be part of the group. No funding has been secured to date for the plans proposed for 2024, however, funding for 22 days work has been agreed to clear gorse and birch between Fanny's Lane, The Slade and Burdens Heath.	
15.2	<b><u>Proposed cuts by WBC.</u></b> It was questioned whether WBC are currently getting value for money from their contractors who carry out the urban grass cutting. Areas in the parish on this programme should be cut seven times a year, it is questioned whether some of these areas are cut at all. The Clerk has requested clarification from WBC on what spaces in Bucklebury are covered by the open space grass cutting programme. BPC, which is not eligible for the General Power of Competence, does not have the power to clear roadside gullies and should therefore resist undertaking this task.	
16	<b><u>Correspondence.</u></b>	
16.1	<b><u>District Parish Conference.</u></b> The District Parish Conference will be a hybrid event, held in Shawl House on Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> January from 2pm.	
16.2	<b><u>Police and Crime Community Fund.</u></b> Applications for money from this fund need to be submitted before the end of January. It was agreed that Cllr. Willett would forward this information to the PCC who may be interested.	CW

**The meeting concluded at 10.07pm.**

**Date of next meeting:**

**Bucklebury Planning: 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 (Cancelled due to lack of business).**

**BPC meeting: Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.45pm – The Victory Room.**

Signed .....

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