Minutes of the meeting of Bucklebury Parish Council held in The Victory Room, Bucklebury on Monday 9th September 2024 at 7.45pm

Present: Cllr. B. Dickens (Chairman); Cllr. G. Loader; Cllr. M. Morgan; Cllr. D. Southgate; Cllr. P. Teal; Cllr. C. Willett; Cllr. L. Windmill; Cllr. G. Woods; District Cllr. C. Read; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).
Two members of the public were present, one who was co-opted onto BPC; Cllr. G. Pask.

1 **Apologies**.
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Allum and Cllr. Spours.

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 other 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 12th August 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

5 **Co-option of a new Councillor.**
A notice advertising the vacancy for a councillor for the East Ward was advertised on the noticeboards and the website on Tuesday 13th August. WBC has now confirmed that there have been no requests for a by-election.
It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Graham Pask onto BPC. Cllr. Pask signed his declaration of office.

6 **Clerk's Report.**

6.1 Common Clearing – Saturday 5th October.
Cllr. Windmill will sort out refreshments for Common Clearing. A number of councillors will supply a cake. LW
A trailer to collect rubbish bags and larger items has been organised. HP

6.2 West Berkshire Countryside Society (WBCS).
BPC has not made a donation to WBCS since November 2022. The budget for FY23/24 contained £500 and the budget for FY24/25 contains £525 for the WBCS. BPC will make a donation of £1,000 to WBCS.

6.3 October meeting.
The Clerk will not be at the BPC meeting on the 14th October. A former parish councillor will be taking the minutes of the meeting which the Clerk will write up.

6.4 Next edition of The Oaks.
The next edition of The Oaks will be published in early November. The deadline for articles will be mid-October (date to be confirmed). HP

7 **Planning.**

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

7.1.1 **24/01708/HOUSE – 22 Berry's Road.**
Proposed front extension.
It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application.

7.1.2 **24/01767/FUL – Spring Cottage, Chapel Row.**
Retrospective: We would like to be permitted to regularly rent out our existing swimming pool to local swim schools for lessons. The pool and changing room areas are entirely self-contained, with their own entrance and toilet facilities. There is a specified parking

area to the side of the house. There are 6 swim schools that would like to use the pool, covering 28 hrs a week spread over 7 days.
Given that the swimming pool is inside, it is unlikely to cause noise issues for neighbours. WBC has raised concern about the potential number of vehicle movements, although the applicant commented that the calculated number is much higher than the actual number because there are only 5 swimmers per lesson and some lessons are one to one.
It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application, subject to lessons not taking place after 7pm.

7.2 Planning Decisions made by WBC:

7.2.1 **Kingsmead, Southend (Stanford Dingley).**
Retrospective application for replacement garage ancillary building.
BPC had **no comment** on this application which has been **approved** by WBC.

7.3 Adjacent Parish Applications.
The following applications have been submitted within 200m of the parish boundary:

7.3.1 **24/01725/LBC – Kiff Green Farm.**
Replacement window.
BPC will not make any comment on this application.

7.4 Update on the Local Plan.
The Planning Inspector has requested additional hearings to start on Tuesday 1st October. Cllr. Southgate has agreed to attend with Andrew Black, the planning consultant, representing BPC. BPC has already submitted a letter to the Inspector, following the Inspector's latest interim report. The Inspector, in the interim report has said that for the Plan to be sound, the NE Thatcham site must contain 2,500 homes, not 1,500 as in the submitted plan, and additional sites.
The final version of the report is expected in early to mid November.
Andrew Black is of the opinion that the Inspector's interim report may be open to legal challenge on the grounds that he has largely disregarded the comments of Thatcham TC (TTC) and BPC. A King's Counsel opinion is expected to cost in the region of £7,000, but this would determine whether there might be value in going to Judicial Review. TTC have not financially contributed to opposing NE Thatcham to date. District Cllr. Read has spoken to Cllr. Owen Jeffery (deputy leader of TTC) and made it clear that BPC has expectations that TTC will join BPC in setting aside funds to oppose NE Thatcham. Cllr. Dickens will be writing to the other councils within the Bucklebury Ward asking if they would be willing to make a small financial contribution.
To date, BPC has spent £19,736 on opposing the NE Thatcham development, which has been funded by public donations, a donation from Midgham PC and BPC precept. A sum of £9,204 remains allocated to opposing NE Thatcham. It was questioned whether it was appropriate to add the £5,000, added to the precept for grass cutting, in response to WBC's budget consultation which has not resulted in any obvious change to grass cutting in the parish, to the sum for opposing NE Thatcham.
Another Public Meeting needs to be scheduled, but it is currently a little premature.
It was agreed that Cllr. Pask would take on responsibility for the Local Plan, working alongside Cllr. Dickens and Cllr. Spours.

8 **District Councillor's Report.**
It was questioned how many houses are being built in Theale. Those currently being built are in the current Local Plan.
WBC is introducing a kerbside battery recycling scheme.
The Scrutiny Report has been published, covering the work of the WBC Scrutiny Committee which ensures that public funds are spent effectively and works with partner organisations to work towards the best level of service being provided to the residents of West Berkshire.

WBC is running a community planning forum on Tuesday 10th September at Henwick Worthy sports ground (or via Zoom). Topics to be covered include updates on local and national planning changes, WBC's digital planning service and bio-diversity net gain.

9 **Meeting with Olivia Bailey MP (Wednesday 25th September).**

The invite to the Chairman of all the parishes within the Bucklebury Ward to the meeting with the MP has been accepted. The plan is to allocate 30 minutes to NE Thatcham and then 15 minutes to each parish for a parish specific matter (to be raised in advance to give Olivia Bailey time to prepare).

Suggestions for BPC's topics included the rebuilding of the Royal Berkshire Hospital and speeding, if this is not covered in District Cllr. Read's tour round the Ward with Olivia Bailey prior to the meeting.

10 **Finances.**

10.1 Payments to be authorised by Councillors:

The Alpha Xperience	£576.25	1000 copies of D-Day 80 Oaks publication.
Bibby Commercial Finance Ltd	£32.64	August dog waste bins.
Timber for playpark (expenses)	£8.80	
Bucklebury Memorial Hall	£65.18	Rent for coffee mornings and meeting 1/7/24 to 30/9/24.
Salaries, PAYE & Pension contributions	£1,093.64	August 2024

10.2 To review current balances.

Lloyds Current Account balance after all cheques cleared and lodgements received:	£12,961.84	
Lloyds Current Account:	£25,783.65	20th August 2024
Lloyds Business Instant Account for meadows:	£32,911.22	20th August 2024
Scottish Widows Reserve Account:	£33,313.35	8th April 2024
Scottish Widows Gilroy Account:	£4,658.72	8th April 2024

The Clerk circulated a bank reconciliation to the 9th September 2024, which was verified to the most recent bank statements by Cllr. Willett.

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

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk circulated a list of the payments for the surface of the BMX track over the last 5 years. A quote has been obtained from Brennans of Burbage to tarmac the surface, making it less vulnerable to abuse by some users. The contractor supplying the quote has provided references.

It is hoped that funds for the work can be raised from a WBC CIL bid, but the minimum value of applications is £10,000. Cllr. Teal has obtained a quote from Fox Fencing for improvements to the fencing and a new gate to the play area.

The total of both quotes is in excess of £10,000 and it was agreed that Cllr. Teal would submit an application for a CIL bid to WBC. PT

12 **Cemetery.**

The data signal around the Cemetery needs to be checked to ensure that any card readers purchased will work in the Cemetery enabling their use at Cemetery Carols. GL

The Clerk will organise a Cemetery working party in late October/November. HP

13 **Meadows.**

The hay has been cut in all three meadows. Work needs to be carried out on the hedges. Cllr. Pask commented that there are a number of dead trees in the hedges and the split oak in the north west corner of the large meadow (belonging to the adjacent property).

	The WBCS will be having a working party in the meadows in December. Cllr. Pask agreed to take on responsibility for the meadows and the Hockett Field. A meeting of the Meadows Committee needs to be organised.	HP
14	**Highways.**	
14.1	Speed Indicator Device (SID). SID is being regularly deployed throughout the parish and is currently being used on Burdens Heath. Over 650,000 data points have been recorded (the speed of 650,000 vehicles). Cllr. Southgate is debating changing the messages displayed to passing vehicles. New volunteers have come forwards, so Cllr. Southgate will be running another training session.	DS DS
14.2	Community Speed Watch (CSW). A link to the CSW (online) training has been distributed amongst BPC and those who operate SID. A couple of people have completed the training, which is probably sufficient for Thames Valley Police (TVP) to supply the equipment. Cllr. Southgate will proceed with the next stage of CSW deployment.	DS
14.3	Bucklebury Ford and the Swale. Cllr. Southgate will write a report on the ford and the swale, and circulate it before the next BPC meeting. The swale continues to be dry, but it was suggested that it is unlikely to be dry through the winter.	DS
14.4	Proceeds of Crime Grant Application. An application has been made to the Proceeds of Crime Fund for 8 Auto Speed Watch cameras. Whilst Auto Speed Watch is not currently approved in the Thames Valley policing area, it is hoped that this application will raise its profile and lead to TVP approving use of the system.	
15	**Environment.**	
15.1	Location of the Peaches Noticeboard. The galvanised support for the Peaches Noticeboard is ready for delivery. Cllr. Allum hired a CAT scanner to check for cables before returning the noticeboard to the Peaches carpark, however, there is a high voltage cable running very close to the position of the legs. Other potentially suitable sites were scanned, including on the opposite side of the carpark, outside All Saint's Church, outside 30 Roundfield, on the triangle opposite the garage and next to the bus shelter on Broad Lane. The preferred location is where it has historically been located. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Tactical Facilities Ltd about installing the support.	HP
15.2	Sustainable Bucklebury. The Sustainable Bucklebury group had a successful stand at Bucklebury Beerfest. The group now has a website. The possibility of Sustainable Bucklebury being a committee or working group of BPC is being explored. Sustainable Overton is linked to Overton Parish Council and Cllr. Loader is exploring its constitution. It is hoped to hold a public meeting to properly start the group.	GL
15.3	Works on the Common. Work on the Common to clear the gulleys and build leaky dams is due to start imminently. A flyer has been produced by Sundew Ecology which contains an approximate timeline of proposed work. A copy of this has been put on the BPC website. The Estate has appointed a full-time ranger who is working on the Common.	
15.4	VE Day 80 (8th May 2025). Cllr. Woods has been trying to organise a meeting of those interested in helping with an event for the 80th anniversary of VE Day. A number of people are interested, but it is proving challenging to get them together. Beacons are being lit across the country at 9.30pm and there are official tributes to be read. It is proposed that there will be ancillary activities on the Green at Chapel Row.	GW

16 **Correspondence.**

16.1 Ragwort.
A parish councillor in Beenham has written to BPC requesting support controlling the spread of ragwort. Cllr. Windmill agreed to write an article for The Oaks on ragwort. It has been mentioned in a report on verge clearance particularly in relation to site lines. LW

16.2 WBC Scrutiny Committee meeting with Thames Water and Environment Agency.
The WBC Scrutiny Committee has a meeting with Thames Water and the Environment Agency. District Cllr. Read has asked if BPC has any questions or comments which should be raised, particularly in the area of sewage and waste discharge.
Cllr. Teal commented that Thatcham Sewage Works is at capacity, and asked when are Thames Water planning to extend it? When NE Thatcham is developed, it is assumed that sewage will be fed into the existing A4 and Floral Way sewage systems, but both of these systems are at maximum capacity, and flow into the Thatcham Sewage Works.
It was also noted that in Bucklebury parish there are a number of under invested, over capacity package sewage works which are discharging into the river Pang (or the river Bourne).

17 **Reports from any other meetings.**

17.1 Common Interest Group.
Cllr. Loader attended a Common Interest Group meeting. Seasonal TROs will be coming into effect on the 1st November 2024 for six months. There was some discussion about whether the byway between Greens Old Farm and Sadgrove (BUCK 49/7) would be included or not.
Thatcham Angling Club has relinquished its agreement, with the Estate, on the fishponds. Licenses to fish at the fish ponds and also on the stretch of the Pang owned by the Estate will be available, on an annual basis, from the Estate Office.
Permission has been granted for a pétanque court at Chapel Row on the Green.

18 **Round Table Comments.**

18.1 Monthly Coffee Mornings.
Cllr. Southgate reported that one of the elderly helpers had injured himself when helping to put the tables up for the August coffee morning. This raised questions about first aid training and a first aid kit (which was eventually found in the Memorial Hall). Questions were asked about what level of training is required; it was agreed that Emergency First Aid would be a step in the right direction.

18.2 Verges.
Cllr. Teal reported that he has carried out a survey of the verges across the parish. He has concluded that generally they are not too bad, but that visibility at the cross roads of Burdens Heath and Briff Lane is one of the worst road junctions in the parish.
A number of roads are particularly bad for pedestrians, including Briff Lane from Miles Green northwards on both sides, Pease Hill where vegetation is overhanging the road, and the north side of Byles Green from Jasmine Cottage to the Cemetery.
This report will be submitted to District Cllr. Read to send to WBC.

18.3 Memorial Hall.
In the proposed improvements for disabled access to the Memorial Hall, it was suggested that clearly designated pedestrian and vehicular routes would make access to the hall much safer.

The meeting concluded at 10.05pm.

Date of next meetings:

BPC Planning meeting: Monday 23rd September 2024 at 7.45pm – The Victory Room.
BPC meeting: Monday 14th October 2024 at 7.45pm – The Victory Room.
Common Clearing: Saturday 5th October 2024, 2pm at the Memorial Hall

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