

Minutes of the meeting of Bucklebury Parish Council

held in The Victory Room, Bucklebury on

Monday 11th December 2023 at 7.30pm

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 were present, including the applicant of applications 23/02694/HOUSE and 23/02695/LBC.

Apologies.

No apologies of absence were received.

Declarations of Interest.

Register of Interests.

There were no updates to the Register of Interests.

Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items.

There were no declarations of interest in any agenda items.

Public Session.

There were no matters raised during the public session.

Minutes of meetings of Bucklebury Parish Council.

The minutes of the meeting of BPC held on Monday 13th November 2023 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by Cllr. Dickens.

Chair's Report.

Website.

Cllr. Dickens commented that one or two councillors don't have contact details listed on the website. It was agreed that all councillor check their details and advise the Clerk of any updates.

Clerk's Report

Split Oak overhanging the Meadows.

The area under the split oak tree has been taped off with an explanatory notice. Notices were also placed at each of the three entrances to the meadow, but these have all been removed.

Appointing a new Councillor.

WBC has been informed of the vacancy in the West Ward for a councillor. Parishioners have 14 days for a minimum of 10 parishioners to request a by-election. If no such requests are received, BPC may co-opt a candidate to fill the vacancy.

Dates for Common Clearing in 2024.

The litter picking equipment and the Oak Room have been booked for Common Clearing on Saturday 23rd March and Saturday 5th October.

Chapel Row Defibrillator.

The battery in the Chapel Row defibrillator has been replaced and it is registered as active on the The Circuit.

Parish Council Email Addresses.

Investigations have taken place into the Microsoft Not for Profit package; parish councils do not qualify. The cost for individual Microsoft accounts is approximately £40 per account.

The Clerk will make enquiries with other parish councils in West Berkshire about how they handle the situation, before a further discussion at the January BPC meeting.

Meeting Dates in 2024.

The Clerk will circulate dates for meetings in 2024.

All

HP

HP

Signed

Date

2023/56

6.3	<u>The Oaks.</u> It is planned to publish the next edition of The Oaks during February.	HP		
7	<u>Planning.</u>			
7.1	<u>Planning applications on which BPC has been consulted by WBC:</u>			
7.1.1	23/02694/HOUSE & 23/02695/LBC – Little Thatch, The Avenue. <i>Single-storey infill rear extension with internal alterations, addition of dormer window and covered porch and replacement windows.</i> It was agreed that BPC has no objection to this application.			
7.2	<u>Planning Decisions made by WBC:</u>			
7.2.1	22/03123/FULMAJ – Frilsham Lime Quarry. <i>Two new residential dwellings (Use Class C3) of exceptional quality and design, garaging, access, hard and soft landscape enhancements, biodiversity improvements and associated works.</i> BPC objected to this application which has been approved by WBC.			
7.2.2	23/00562/FUL – Oak Acre House, The Avenue. <i>28 panels mounted via a ground mounted racking system. The panels will be pitched at 25 degrees with the highest part of the panel sitting ~2m off the surface of the ground. The proposed panels are ‘all black’ in finish to improve the aesthetic and also make the installation less visually obtrusive. The installation is expected to generate in the region of 11,202 kWh/year which will offset circa 2,201 kgCo2/year (based on MCS approved carbon intensity values).</i> BPC had no objection to this application which has been approved by WBC.			
7.3	<u>Adjacent Parish Applications.</u>			
7.3.1	23/02634/HOUSE – 10 Midgham Green. <i>First floor extension.</i> It was agreed that this application would have little impact on Bucklebury parish.			
7.4	<u>Update on the Local Plan.</u> Cllr. Spours and Cllr. Dickens have met with Andrew Black, the planning consultant. It is understood that the Local Plan may be withdrawn and return to Regulation 18 (request for land). The existing Local Plan is current until 2026 and the land supply a little earlier. Cllr. Dickens has a letter ready to send to Laura Farris MP asking for her support in the potential withdrawal of the Local Plan and to encourage her to advocate at a government level this course of action.			
8	<u>District Council Business.</u> An Extra Ordinary meeting of WBC has been scheduled for the 19 th December, and may be of interest to councillors. Work is going on to try and include sites for development in the Local Plan which are within existing settlement boundaries and on brownfield sites. WBC has attempted to change THA20, but the planning inspector has not agreed. Questions were asked about whether WBC has the resources to return to Regulation 18 of the Local Plan. In the next financial year savings of £14 million need to be made, proposals for savings of £10 million are currently being consulted upon. A pilot 20mph scheme is to be implemented in Theale in 2024/25. It was suggested that Bucklebury should register an interest in the scheme in Bucklebury Village with John Winstanley; this will be discussed further at the January BPC meeting.			
9	<u>Finances.</u>			
9.1.1	<u>Payments to be authorised by Councillors:</u>			
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Tactical Facilities Management Ltd</td><td>£32.64</td><td>Weekly emptying of 2 dog bins (November).</td></tr> </table>		Tactical Facilities Management Ltd	£32.64
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Salaries, expenses, pensions, PAYE	£1,392.79	Expenses include speed awareness competition, wine for retirement of District Councillor and defibrillator battery.
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9.2 To review current balances.

Lloyds Current Account balance after all cheques cleared and lodgements received:	£37,720.49	
Lloyds Current Account:	£41,713.54	20 th November 2023
Lloyds Business Instant Account for meadows:	£32,595.52	20 th November 2023
Scottish Widows Reserve Account:	£32,868.17	4 th April 2023
Scottish Widows Gilroy Account:	£4,596.47	4 th April 2023

9.3 Budget for FY24/25.

The draft budget shows an expected basic expenditure (excluding the meadows) of £32,134 for FY23/24 and a proposed basic expenditure for FY24/25 of £34,451. Capital projects for the current year (FY23/24) have included approximately £7,000 on opposing the draft Local Plan, £1,793 on a new defibrillator and funds for the Memorial Hall (see later in these minutes). The proposed capital project for next year is the Local Plan with funds of £15,600. At the end of this financial year there will be £15,000 ring fenced for improvements to the Fred Dawson playpark. If BPC continues to add £5,000 per annum to this fund, without increasing the precept to cover this item there will be a depleting surplus of funds, ultimately leading to a deficit.

10 Cemetery and Chapel.

10.1 Cemetery Carols.

It was agreed that all funds raised at Cemetery Carols would be donated to the WB Foodbank.

Mince pies will be made and donated by a number of parishioners and councillors. A resident of Burdens Heath has agreed to supply and play the keyboard.

The Chapel will be decorated on Monday 18th December at 10am, with helpers for the event arriving from 4.45pm. Nightlights and lighters are needed. Tidying up after the event will take place from 9am on Tuesday 19th December.

11 D-Day Anniversary.

There was a discussion on where any event might take place.

Cllr. Southgate will take drawings for a beacon to the local blacksmith for a quote and

Cllr. Allum will obtain a second quote.

12 Fred Dawson Play area and BMX Track.

Cllr. Teal reported that the fixings for the parallel bars are tight due to the wood swelling with the rain.

Cllr. Southgate has got replacement clips for the fencing.

No other issues were reported with the play area or BMX track.

13 Highways.

13.1 Speed Competition Posters.

There was no update on printing of the posters.

13.2 Use of SID in the Parish.

Approximately 215,000 datapoints have now been collected.

Use of SID in Bucklebury Village is to be encouraged so that there is evidence of the speed there to support a 20mph zone, assuming parishioners would support it.

13.3 Thames Valley Police Community Speed Watch (CSW).

A Members Bid has been approved for part of the cost of CSW signage (and printing of the speed competition posters). The sites for the signage need to be assessed by WBC.

HP
JA
DS
LC
BD

DS
JA

PT
DS

Signed

Date

2023/58

	The next phase of the project is to get sufficient volunteers trained; each session of use requires three trained volunteers to gather the required data. Cllr. Southgate is sharing knowledge with WBC on managing the data and helping other nearby parish councils.	
14	<u>Environment.</u>	
14.1	<u>Works on the Common.</u> Funding has been obtained for 22 days work on clearing birch and gorse north of Burdens Heath between Fanny's Lane and the Slade. This work is expected to take place later this month and into 2024.	
14.2	<u>Correspondence.</u>	
14.3	<u>Bucklebury Community Bus.</u> It was agreed to make a donation of £500 to the Bucklebury Community Bus.	
15	<u>WBC Consultation on Spending cuts.</u> The WBC consultation on spending cuts led to a discussion about grass cutting (verges, The Avenue, the football pitch at the Victory Room and other grass cut by WBC in the parish) and the clearing of gullies. The Clerk raised concerns about what BPC has the powers to do in terms of gullies and will consult BALC for advice. The Clerk, Cllr. Dickens and District Cllr. Read will work on researching the options.	HP BD CR
16	<u>Reports.</u>	
16.1	<u>Bucklebury Memorial Hall.</u> The Memorial Hall boiler has failed and a new boiler is to be installed at a cost of £6,000, which includes a 10 year warranty. There were questions about whether or not the old boiler was being serviced on a regular basis. It was agreed to make a contribution to the Memorial Hall of £3,000 for the new boiler, from the £9,000 of ring-fenced money held for the Memorial Hall.	
17	<u>Local Government Association (LGA) Pay Award.</u> The LGA has agreed a pay award of an additional £1.00 per hour, back dated to the 1 st April 2023. It was resolved that the Clerk be given the LGA pay award	
18	<u>Round Table Comments.</u>	
18.1	<u>Withdrawal of funding for Bucklebury children to the Downs School.</u> It was questioned why WBC funding for children's transport to the Downs School is to be withdrawn. Funding is only mandatory for travel to the closest school (assuming it is more than a minimum distance), even though this may not be the catchment school. This legislation is set by central government.	
18.2	<u>Grit Bins.</u> Cllr. Southgate has stocks of grit for filling the grit bins. Cllr. Allum agreed to help Cllr. Southgate fill up the grit bins across the parish.	DS JA
18.3	<u>Hawkrigde Barn.</u> It is understood that the planning applications for the Barn at Hawkrigde will not be withdrawn at this stage, but that additional drawings will be submitted.	

The meeting concluded at 9.25pm.

Date of next meeting:

Bucklebury Planning: No meeting in December.

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

Signed

Date
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