

BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Meeting held at 8pm in the Reading Room on Monday 8th July 2024.

Present: Cllrs Husband (Chair), Jones and Steed.

In attendance Surrey County Council (SCC) Cllr Helyn Clack, Mole Valley District (MVDC) Cllr Simon Budd, and the Clerk. Two residents participated in the Open Forum.

1. Apologies for Absence

(70) Council **resolved** to accept apologies from Cllrs Bourke, Cox, Gowrley and Pryor and noted apologies had also been received from MVDC Cllrs Paul Potter and Paula Keay.

2. Declarations of Interest

(71) None.

3. Requests for Dispensations

(72) None.

4. Minutes

(73) Council **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 13th May 2024. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. Open Forum

(74) Council noted the following input from two residents:

- (i) concern was expressed about a lack of coordinated action, clear communication and adequate signage during the recent emergency utility works;
- (ii) SCC statements advising responsibility for traffic management rests with the utility company fails to recognise the need for local knowledge to be collected to help the utility company assess requests from residents in a balanced way; and
- (iii) the impression gained has been that the broader implications of responding to requests from highly vocal individuals were not adequately assessed.

(75) Cllr Husband thanked the residents for their input which had included feedback from conversations conducted with the drivers of heavy goods vehicles who had advised:

- (i) the presence of a not suitable for HGV sign positioned on the B2032 at Betchworth roundabout led HGV drivers who routinely follow this route to believe there must be a problem on Station Road/Pebble Hill Road that required them to divert from the B road onto more minor roads to the south of the A25 Reigate Road;
- (ii) drivers struggling to route via Old Road admitted they had misinterpreted the arrow sign positioned on the verge to the left of Station Road as directing them south on Station Road rather than west towards Dorking along the A25, leading them to complete a circuit via Old Reigate Road, Old Road and the A25 westbound before routing via Sandy Lane and Wonham Lane. The right arrow sign needed to be positioned on the central island at the Station Road exit to make it absolutely clear the diversion was to remain on the A25 Reigate Road and travel westwards towards Dorking;
- (iii) the position of the two signs installed at the junction of Sandy Lane and Wonham Lane (at the request of a Wonham Lane resident) did not provide any routing for large vehicles that reached this point. These signs needed to be positioned at the junction of Wonham Lane and The Street and The Street and Old Reigate Road to deter drivers commencing inappropriate routes. Ideally these signs needed to be accompanied by an arrow directing the drivers to route via The Street;
- (iv) similar signage was needed on both arms of Trumpets Hill to deter drivers of large vehicles turning off Flanchford Road.

6. Highways

Highways – A25 Road Closures

(76) Council **resolved** to write to SCC Highways to:

- (i) express Council's belief that there is a need for a more collaborative approach between SCC Highways Streetworks team and the utility companies when agreeing how best to keep traffic moving during both scheduled and emergency works;
- (ii) ask for signage to be installed en-route to
 - (a) make it easy for drivers to find information about how their journey will be affected by the "road closure ahead"; and
 - (b) make it clear to drivers when they need to divert to avoid any need to execute a u-turn as they approach the road closure;
 - (c) install advisory signs at junctions with minor roads on the approach to a closure to ensure HGV drivers, who do initially ignore road closure signs and subsequently execute a u-turn, do not divert via local minor roads; and
 - (d) help everyone understand which local businesses can still be accessed;
- (iii) emphasise the need for those considering a request for signage from individual residents to take the necessary steps to ensure that any agreement to install the requested signage does not lead to traffic being diverted onto roads even less suited to that traffic;
- (iv) ask for clearly defined escalation procedures to be agreed to enable parish councils to liaise with relevant SCC officers and Utility Company employees to enable local knowledge to be shared and timely updates to be issued to local residents and businesses by the parish council; and
- (v) based upon the experience of the recent emergency gas works on the A25 Reigate Road to state that in the event of a closure of the A25 Reigate Road between Betchworth roundabout and the Red Cross in Reigate, there is a need for:
 - (a) signage installed on the A25 Reigate Road on the eastern exit of Betchworth roundabout to be positioned on the carriageway to make it absolutely clear to drivers this is when they need to divert to avoid any need to execute a U-turn;
 - (b) Not suitable for HGV signs to be installed:
 - at the junction of Old Road and the A25 Reigate Road
 - at the junction of Wonham Lane and The Street
 - at the junction of The Street and Old Reigate Road; and
 - on both arms of the triangle of roads at Trumpets Hill.
 - (c) the aforementioned signs to be installed across these minor roads to the south of the A25 between Buckland, Betchworth and Reigate **prior** to any agreement to install a sign intended to deter vehicles from travelling on the B2032 north of Betchworth roundabout, a road, which by its B category is ordinarily suitable for HGV traffic; and
- (vi) to offer to participate in any initiative SCC Highways may establish to address Council's concerns. **Action:** Clerk

(77) Council asked SCC Cllr Helyn Clack to request SCC Streetworks team publish details of the likely nature, extent and impact of work instead of the currently published summary terms of the licence being granted to implement a partial or total road closure. Council welcomed SCC Clack's response that SCC Highways has a project underway to utilise Fixmystreet and that once launched this should provide the requested information.

(78) Council **resolved** to ask SCC Cllr Helyn Clack to:

- (i) raise Council's concern that recent failures in the gas network, resulting in two full closures of the A25, is linked to vibrations caused by heavy lorries, diverted from the M25, travelling along the route; and
- (ii) ask for complaints submitted to SCC Highways by residents concerned about the impact of that vibration on their homes to be revisited. **Action:** Clerk

- (79) Council **resolved** to establish contact with Southern Gas Networks in advance of the inevitable next closure given the ageing infrastructure. **Action:** Clerk.

Highways – Maintenance

- (80) Council **resolved** to record a vote of thanks to SCC Cllr Helyn Clack for the part she had played in the recently completed drainage works alongside the A25 to the west of The Pheasant.
- (81) Council noted:
- (i) the recently resolved drainage issue had been an ongoing concern for over ten years; and
 - (ii) its hope that it will not take as long for SCC Highways to resolve the very similar drainage issue that exists between the village centre and Tranquil Dale and results in ponding opposite the exit to the Shell garage.

Actions: Clerk to write to SCC Cllr Helyn Clack to query status of drainage investigations between village centre and Tranquil Dale and enquire as to the priority accorded to its request for reconstruction of the A25 roadside footway between The Pheasant and the driveway to Buckland Court.

Highways – A25 Road Safety Improvements

- (82) Council noted:
- (i) SCC Highways signs erected on the A25 Reigate Road had announced a consultation on proposals within Reigate on West Street to commence 24th May 2024;
 - (ii) the announcement of the general election had restricted promotion of the consultation and led to a planned drop in session being deferred to Thursday 11th July 2024;
 - (iii) publication of summary information on the SCC website at the start of June had prompted a series of questions which had been submitted via SCC Helyn Clack on 9th June 2024;
 - (iv) no response to the questions had been received; and
 - (v) a key concern remains that the summary information currently suggests public consultations will only be undertaken on the proposals for the junction of Brockham Lane and within Dorking and Reigate.
- (83) Council, noting that the SCC team heading up implementation of the safety improvements had promised to meet with the parish councils, asked SCC Cllr Clack to seek the team's assurance that this meeting will happen early enough for any local knowledge and feedback to be reflected in the final designs.
- (84) Council noted Cllr Steed will attend the drop in session scheduled for July 11th and hope to establish a dialogue with the key officers.

Actions: Clerk to submit responses to consultation consistent with the content of the communication dated 9th June. Cllr Steed and the Clerk, with the support of SCC Cllr Clack to continue to work towards securing a timely meeting with the relevant SCC officers.

Highways – Grass Cutting

- (85) Council noted:
- (i) the poor standard of the grass cutting that appeared to have been undertaken in a haphazard way over an extended period;
 - (ii) the grass cutting map published on the SCC website is incorrect for Old Road. If used by contractors any work undertaken is likely to result in unstable sandy banks being undermined and private hedgerows and trees being damaged;
 - (iii) a response to an enquiry submitted by a resident on 23rd June is awaited.
- (86) Council **resolved** to advise the resident to escalate the enquiry to SCC Cllr Clack if an adequate response is not received by Monday 15th July 2024. **Action:** Clerk to relay Council's advice to resident.

Highways – Street Cleaning

(87) Council noted:

- (i) Amey, the contractor appointed by MVDC to undertake street cleaning had advised street cleaning to fully expose the sections of kerbing against grass verges, previously reported by Council as “ have been exposed, but not consistently” would be completed once SCC Highways contractors had completed the rural verge cut;
- (ii) Karen Brimacombe, MVDC Chief Executive had acknowledged receipt of the advice on 19th June 2024 that the rural cut had been completed;
- (iii) Mole Valley Joint Waste Services had advised Amey are scheduled to attend Buckland on Friday 12th July 2024.

Action: Clerk to maintain watching brief until such time as the work has been completed.

7. Planning

Planning Notifications

(88) Council noted the following Planning Authority notifications:

- (i) MO/2024/0498: Erection of two-storey side and rear extension following demolition of an existing single-storey rear extension at Larchfield, Old Road, Buckland, RH3 7DU. Refused.
- (ii) MO/2024/0577: Erection of a garden shed/store following removal of existing at Meadowsweet, Rectory Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BH. Approved with conditions.
- (iii) MO/2024/0626: Remove 1 Spruce tree at Larkrise, Rectory Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BH. No objection.
- (iv) MO/2024/0677: Prior notification for the erection of an agricultural storage barn (30.48m x 5.5m) for the storage of agricultural plant and machinery at Crossways Kennels and Cattery, Crossways Farm, Station Road, Betchworth, RH3 7DF. Refused.
- (v) MO/2024/0930: Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development in respect of a part hip to gable loft conversion with a rear aspect flat roof dormer, 2 No. front roof lights at Burley, Old Road, Buckland, RH3 7DU. Application Registered.
- (vi) SCC/2024/0103: Screening Opinion: Proposed amendment of conditions (no. 1, 3 and 7) relating to the restoration scheme requirements of planning permission ref. MO10/0847 dated 26 February 2016 at Former Tapwood Quarry, Reigate Road, Buckland, Surrey. Screening Opinion conclusion: no Environmental Impact Assessment required.

(89) Council **resolved** to submit a response to MVDC re: MO/2024/0930 to:

- (i) state that Council, consistent with previous Council responses, seeks to discourage designs that increase overlooking into neighbouring properties or incorporate raised external living space that could result in a loss of the amenity and privacy of neighbouring properties;
- (ii) ask MVDC to require the applicant to provide evidence that the integral garage and first floor rooms above the garage were constructed prior to 1st July 1948; and
- (iii) if the applicant is unable to provide evidence to support the claim that the existing roof space forms part of the original property (i.e. as at 1st July 1948) and so demonstrate that the only relevant calculation now needed is the additional proposed volume to be added by the roof extension, to ask for the applicant to be required to submit an application for planning permission.

Action: Clerk

New Planning Applications

(90) Council **resolved** not to make any comment on the following applications:

- (i) MO/2024/0791: Demolition of 2 No. existing sheds and erection of an Oak framed outbuilding at 3 Buckland Court, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH3 7EA; and
- (ii) MO/2024/0903: Remove one Walnut tree at Yewdells, Dungates Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BD.

- (91) Council noted an update from the Clerk, that following consultation with Cllrs who serve on the Planning Committee, an objection had been raised with respect to the following applications pending the promised submission or revised drawings and block plan, amended to be consistent with the development set out in the description:
- (i) MO/2024/0785: Demolition of rear extension and outbuildings; Erection of single/ part two storey side/rear extensions with internal alterations. Alterations to porch and upgrade to existing facade. Alterations to front driveway to provide new automatic sliding entrance gates at The Old Cottage, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH3 7BG.
 - (ii) MO/2024/0781: Application for Listed Building Consent. Demolition of rear extension and outbuildings; Erection of single/ part two storey side/rear extensions with internal alterations. Alterations to porch and upgrade to existing facade. Alterations to front driveway to provide new automatic sliding entrance gates at The Old Cottage, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH3 7BG.
- (92) MO/2024/0883: Erection of a single storey and two-storey rear extension, including addition of externally insulated render to existing garage, convert garage to a habitable space with a new first floor dormer window at Larchfield, Old Road, Buckland, RH3 7DU. Council **resolved** to submit a response, consistent with previous Council responses to:
- (i) state that Council, consistent with previous Council responses, seeks to discourage designs that increase overlooking into neighbouring properties or incorporate raised external living space that could result in a loss of the amenity and privacy of neighbouring properties; and
 - (ii) ask MVDC to give appropriate weight to any representations, as may be submitted by immediate neighbours, that express concern about the impact of the proposals.

Planning Enforcement

- (93) Council noted:
- (i) an ongoing breach of condition 2 attached to application MO/2014/1045 (Karcher Cleaning) had been brought to MVDC's attention; and
 - (ii) an update is outstanding on the enforcement enquiry raised with respect to the development south of Betchworth Village Hall asking MVDC to require full compliance with the hard fought for condition that secured a commitment to ensure the residential curtilage of the new dwelling would be restricted to the northwest corner of the plot and the agricultural land beyond that curtilage remain in agricultural use.

Action: Clerk to continue to monitor and seek updates in advance of the next meeting.

Planning Policy

- (94) Council noted MVDC had advised the Local Plan main modifications consultation had been submitted to the Planning Inspector, together with any officer commentary considered appropriate, in May and that it is not thought the calling of the General Election should hold up the process.
- (95) Council noted an invitation to attend an MVDC online workshop, arranged to provide an opportunity to hear from stakeholders about views on issues and opportunities affecting the public realm pursuant to the development of a Masterplan for Dorking and Bookham had been declined.

8. Events and Amenities

- (96) Council **resolved** to record a vote of thanks to Cllr Pryor and Martin Boyce for installing a concrete spur to a post supporting the main parish council noticeboard.
- (97) Council **resolved** to authorise the Clerk to instruct minor repairs to the paving around the War Memorial to ensure the area of paving is safe. The Clerk confirmed there is sufficient funding in the budget for the works to proceed.

- (98) Cllr Husband advised Council arrangements for this year's pond clearance are in hand and that having shared a copy of the article he included in the July issue of the parish magazine with Simon Elson, he was pleased to report the article had helped to reassure the Reigate Area Conservation volunteers their support and effort over the years is much valued by the local community. **Action:** Cllrs Jones and Husband to liaise to finalise the publicity to be included in the August issue of the parish magazine and planning for the event itself.

9. Formalities

- (99) Council noted the Clerk had circulated a draft update to the Financial Regulations:
- (i) based upon the latest model financial regulations recently issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC); and
 - (ii) annotated to indicate which of the optional clauses, incorporated to ensure the model can be adapted to be fit for purpose for all sizes of town and parish councils, it was recommended Council adopt.

Council **resolved** to adopt the updated Financial Regulations. **Action:** Clerk to refresh review dates and publish an updated version.

- (100) Council noted the Clerk had circulated a draft update to the Policy on Signs and Road Markings incorporating a change to refer to the "current edition" of legislation rather than a specific dated version. Council, having reviewed the policy, resolved to approve the recommendation, subject to this change, to otherwise adopt the policy unchanged for a further 3 year period. **Action:** Clerk to refresh review dates and publish updated version.
- (101) Council noted the Clerk had circulated the recently published 2024 Good Councillor Guide to all Councillors.

10. Communications and Consultations

- (102) Council noted:

- (i) the following signposting advice had been issued to residents who had contacted Council since the May meeting requesting action:
 - (a) unauthorised development– submit a planning breach enquiry to MVDC, local planning authority for Buckland;
 - (b) noise complaint – submit a report to MVDC Environmental Health;
 - (c) dust complaint – submit a report to MVDC Environmental Health;
 - (d) road safety – submit a report to SCC Highways and, if considered an immediate danger report to Surrey Police;
 - (e) obstructed sightlines or issues with grass cutting / hedge flailing – submit a report to SCC Highways;
 - (f) overgrown vegetation blocking footways or main carriageway – submit a report to SCC Highways;
 - (g) request for street cleaning, litter picking or removal of a dead animal – submit a report to MVDC; and
 - (h) dangerous parking – report to Surrey Police;
 - (i) inadequate, inappropriate and/or misleading temporary road signs – report to the company undertaking the work i.e. relevant utility company or SCC Highways (check by visiting the Surrey Roadworks map and verifying which company has applied for the road closure licence). If response inadequate request assistance from SCC Highways; and
 - (j) aggressive and/or inconsiderate bus drivers – contact Compass Travel if encountered Monday to Saturdays and Metrobus if Sundays. If unhappy with response submit a report to SCC bus transport team.
- (ii) residents were encouraged to consider seeking an opportunity to discuss their concerns with the relevant resident, landowner, business or community group prior to submitting a report; and
- (iii) residents were advised to contact their elected SCC Cllr or one or more of the three MVDC Cllrs if they are unhappy with the response they receive from SCC or MVDC respectively.

- (103) Council noted the requested crime and incident report had five incidents on or close to the A25 Reigate Road between 13th May and 8th July 2024: a tipper truck driving dangerously through a red lights at roadworks, an abandoned vehicle disrupting traffic flow during tree cutting, concern for a driver asleep in car (awaiting recovery for two flat tyres), a man seen hanging around in winter clothes on a summers day and an incidence of trespass on site of aggregate company.

Surrey Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity

- (104) Council **resolved** to record its disappointment that:
- (i) notes summarising the discussion at the first Re-Betchworth led Biodiversity Project Community Meeting on Wednesday 8th May 2024 held at Surrey Wildlife Trust Nower Wood Education Centre between 7pm and 9pm had downplayed the unanimous objection to use of the word “park” in the project name;
 - (ii) initiatives launched under the Biodiversity project do not make it clear that any information gathered should not require unauthorised access onto private land and have not always made it clear that the presence of rare and/or protected species should not be broadcast to the wider public; and
 - (iii) by not addressing very real concerns being expressed, the working group is giving the impression that they are unwilling to take on any views that do not fully match their own.

Action: Cllr Jones, with support of Cllr Bourke and the Clerk to ensure Council’s concerns are shared with the Biodiversity working group.

Council welcomed the opportunities the Biodiversity project team had recently offered residents across the 4Bs to participate in activities that promote an understanding of Biodiversity and an appreciation for actions they can take in their own gardens but continues to question why the Biodiversity project team feels these activities need the formal designation of a Park.

Action: Cllr Jones, with support of Cllr Bourke and the Clerk to ensure the working group understands that until the group embraces the input of all stakeholders across the broader area of the 4Bs it is seeking to influence that Council will remain unable to give its full support.

- (105) Council noted:
- (i) the Local Government Boundary Commission for England had published its final recommendatons for future electoral arrangements for Surrey County Council;
 - (ii) the draft order to be considered by Government will, if the legislative caseload of the incoming Government permits, allow the changes to be in place for the local elections held in May 2025;
 - (iii) if consideration of the draft order is delayed the May 2025 elections will be contested on the basis of the current electoral arrangements; and
 - (iv) the revised Dorking Rural Division will include Headley, Boxhill, Mickleham and Westhumble and exclude Capel and Ockley.
- (106) Council noted updates issued by the NALC, Surrey ALC, SCC, MVDC, Surrey Police, Surrey Hills Board, Surrey Hills Society, GACC and Gatwick Airport had been circulated to Cllrs and key information published within parish updates.

11. Finance

Account Payments and Receipts

- (107) Council noted Unity Bank had, on 30th June 2024, applied:
- (i) an £18 Q2 service charge to the current account; and
 - (ii) Q2 interest of £179.45 to the instant access savings account.
- (108) Council noted Cllr Jones had verified the bank balances entered on the bank reconciliations prepared for the quarterly period 1st April 2024 to 30th June 2024 against the bank statements, initialled both sets of documents, and confirmed that no exceptions had been identified in the transactions reported between those dates.

- (109) Council **resolved** to approve the following payments:
- (i) SOS Business Supplies £29.99 including £5.00 Vat, Black toner;
 - (ii) SOS Business Supplies £29.94 including £4.99 Vat, A4 paper;
 - (iii) G Burley and Sons Ltd £220.37 including £36.73 Vat, April grass cutting;
 - (iv) Design Lynx Limited, £18.00 incl. £3.00 Vat, Hosting fee for .org.uk domain;
 - (v) HMRC £130.44, PAYE liability re: June salary payment;
 - (vi) Sheena Boyce, £16.88, Mileage; and
 - (vii) HMRC £130.44, PAYE liability re: July salary payment.
- (110) Council noted that the following amounts had been received into the Parish Council bank account between 13th May 2024 and 8th July 2024:
- (i) £74.00 contribution from MVDC of £1 per black sack litter collected during 2023/24; and
 - (ii) £37.50 donation, raised through the sale of walk booklets.
- (111) Council noted the Clerk would append a year to date cashbook and analysis of forecast against budget with the draft minutes.

12. Forthcoming Meetings

- (112) The Parish Council will next meet on Monday 9th September 2024 and meetings are subsequently scheduled to be held in the Reading Room on the following dates:
- 2024: 11th November;
 - 2025: 13th January, 10th March; 12th May; 14th July; 8th September; 10th November;
 - 2026: 12th January; 9th March.
- (113) Pond clearance events are scheduled to be held on Sunday 18th August 2024 and Sunday 1st September 2024.
- (114) Cllr Husband will attend the Surrey Branch of the National Association of Local Councils AGM and Autumn Briefing on Tuesday 19th November 2024 at Silvermere Golf Club, Cobham.
- (115) The 2025 Annual Parish Meeting will be held at 8pm on Monday 31st March 2025 in the Reading Room.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.15p.m.

Sheena Boyce, Clerk email: parishcouncil@bucklandsurrey.org.uk

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