

BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Meeting held at 8pm in the Reading Room on Monday 10th March 2025.

Present: Cllrs Bourke, Cox, Gowrley, Husband (Chair), Jones and Pryor.

In attendance: The Clerk. Mole Valley District (MVDC) Cllrs Simon Budd, and Paula Keay attended part of the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

(271) MVDC Cllr Paul Potter and Surrey County Council (SCC) Cllr Helyn Clack.

2. Declarations of Interest

(272) None.

3. Requests for Dispensations

(273) None.

4. Minutes

(274) Council **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th January 2025. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. Planning

Planning Applications

- (275) MO/2024/2197: Erection of a single storey annex following demolition of existing together with a part single storey front extension and erection of a side first floor extension to the main house at Apple End, Apple Hill, Old Road, Buckland, RH3 7DU. Council noted that following consultation with Cllrs who serve on the Planning Committee, Council had written to MVDC to:
- (i) suggest a lower ridge height on the proposed single storey annex might help to reduce the mass when viewed from Old Road and preserve open sky between Apple End and Sedgemoor; and
 - (ii) ask MVDC to consider removing permitted development rights with respect to new openings in the proposed pitched roofspace of Apple End to ensure the impact of such development on the streetscene will be taken into account via a planning application.
- (276) MO/2025/0141: Retrospective application for the extension of existing car parking area at The Pheasant, Reigate Rd, Buckland, RH3 7BG. Council noted that following consultation with Cllrs who serve on the Planning Committee, Council had written to MVDC to:
- (i) record its disappointment to be commenting on a retrospective application;
 - (ii) express in principle support for a proposal to optimise use of the space available for parking;
 - (iii) request conditions relating to lighting of the car parking including any electric charging points and landscaping consistent with MO/2015/0848 to be attached to any permission granted; and
 - (iv) seek clarification as to whether the definition of “the building” includes the external covered terrace.
- (277) Council noted:
- (i) MO/2025/0196, an application for “tree works in a Conservation area” to the Weeping Willow (*Salix babylonica*) by the village pond, had been submitted, at Council’s request, by David Challice Consulting; and
 - (ii) the requested work is to crown lift to 3 metres for pedestrian clearance and crown reduce by approximately 2-3 metres back to old pruning points only by removing limbs no greater than 0.075 metres in diameter.
- (278) Council noted public access to details relating to MO/2024/2042: Retention of an outbuilding being used as an independent dwelling at Rose Stables, Reigate Heath, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH2 8QP, a planning application initially validated in January 2025, to which three representations had been submitted, had been removed. Council **resolved** to gratefully accept Cllr Keay’s offer to clarify the reasoning with MVDC planning officers.

(279) Council **resolved** not to submit any comment for any of the following applications:

- (i) MO/2025/0131: Erection of a single storey rear extension incl. a raised platform and steps down to rear garden at Wensden, Reigate Rd, Buckland, RH3 7EB;
- (ii) MO/2025/0164: Fell a row of conifer trees at Rana, Old Rd, Buckland, RH3 7DZ; and
- (iii) MO/2025/0313: Erection of a linked detached two storey side extension following demolition of the existing conservatory at Yew Tree Cottage, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH3 7BG.

Planning Notifications

(280) Council noted MVDC had advised:

- (i) an appeal had been lodged against the refusal issued in response to MO/2024/0859: Conversion and change of use of barn to one dwelling Barn north of Wonham Lane, Wonham Lane, Betchworth, RH3 7AD;
- (ii) MO/2025/0113 had been withdrawn and resubmitted as MO/2025/0196 to comply with GDPR requirements.

Planning Enforcement

(281) Council noted the following two enforcement enquiries remain ongoing:

- (i) breach of condition 7 attached to application MO/2001/1627 and the construction of hard standing and bund on agricultural land which is conditioned to remain in agricultural use and where MVDC has advised due process continues to be followed; and
- (ii) breach of condition 2 attached to application MO/2014/1045 (Karcher Cleaning) which relates to unauthorised use of the area around the building for storage of materials. The last communication advised an officer had recently visited the site and is now waiting for the owner to clarify their intentions.

Action: Clerk to continue to monitor.

Planning Policy

(282) Council noted that as the housing delivery test for MVDC had recently been re-calculated at 78% that provided MVDC continues to demonstrate MVDC has a 6-year supply of land (i.e. a 5 year supply plus 20% buffer) that for the purposes of National Planning Policy there is no “established housing need”.

MVDC Development Management and Planning Enforcement Engagement

(283) Council noted Cllr Jones and the Clerk

- (i) had each attended a training session on Monday 10th February which had provided reassurance Council has a good working understanding of current procedures; and
- (ii) are due to attend an inaugural parish council and resident association forum meeting on Thursday 13th March 2025.

6. Highways, Airports and Rights of Way

Highways – A25 Road Safety Improvements

(284) Council noted:

- (i) SCC Highways contractors (Ringway) had commenced work to complete tasks 12/13 of the DfT funded road safety project located on Buckland bends on Monday 3rd February 2025;
- (ii) the licence to facilitate tasks 12/13 had since been temporarily withdrawn by the SCC streetworks team, on Monday 24th February 2025, to allow Southern Gas Networks to investigate reports of gas leaks on the section of the A25 Reigate Road between The Old Cottage and the village centre; and
- (iii) SCC Highways Road Safety team had agreed to change their initial plan to install a shiny silver pole to support an average speed camera in Buckland. A black pole, similar to the poles evident in the vicinity of Silent Pond and along the stretch of the A24 between Dorking and Leatherhead will now be installed at a short distance to the west of the welcome gates located to the east of the church.

Highways - Maintenance

(285) Council noted:

- (i) SCC Highways drainage engineers had been observed working on the section of the A25 between the village centre and Tranquil Dale; and
- (ii) SCC Cllr Clack continues to chase SCC Highways drainage engineers for a status update on the aforementioned section of road.

Action: Clerk to continue to liaise with SCC Cllr Clack.

(286) Council noted the SCC Bus Transport team had recently advised:

- (i) the eastbound bus stop located a short distance to the east of the driveway to Normanton is currently subject to a temporary suspension imposed on safety grounds following several road traffic accidents; and
- (ii) a risk assessment will be undertaken once the current road safety works in this location has been completed to inform a decision to lift the temporary suspension or make it permanent.

Verge and A25 footways

(287) Council noted a three man team, on Monday 28th and Tuesday 29th January had cleared a build-up of seasonal debris from the previously cleared sections of A25 roadside footways still with an intact surface layer.

(288) Council **resolved** to add its weight to the positive feedback received from several residents that had expressed their appreciation for a job well done by the team from Clover Grounds Maintenance. **Action:** Clerk to relay Council's thanks to Jake Burley for his team's hard work and commitment.

Transport for the South East

(289) Council noted:

- (i) the launch of a consultation on a Draft Transport Strategy for SE England;
- (ii) Buckland is in the "Crawley; Dorking and Horley; East Surrey; Reigate" area;
- (iii) the plan includes a stretching:
 - (a) short term (2020s) goal of "Station upgrades and level crossing removals to enable four trains per hour to run at peak times on the North Downs Line";
 - (b) medium term (2030s) goal to remove level crossings from the North Downs Line; and
 - (c) long term (2040s) goal to electrify the unelectrified sections of the North Downs line.

Airports

(290) Cllr Cox provided an update to Council by way of follow up to the most recent GACC newsletter which was issued shortly after the Secretary of State for Transport announced that subject to Gatwick Airport being able to meet her request for assurance on certain aspects of the proposed use of the emergency runway as a second runway that she is minded to approve Gatwick Airport's application for a Development Consent Order.

(291) Council **resolved** to accept Cllr Cox's offer to provide an update on development proposals at Gatwick and Heathrow airports and the CAA airspace review to the Annual Parish Meeting. **Action:** Cllrs Cox and Husband to liaise.

7. Amenities and Volunteer Activity

Annual Parish Meeting

(292) Council reviewed the topics being proposed for the Annual Parish Meeting and agreed it would be appropriate to include an update on potential development at Gatwick and Heathrow Airport in addition to a focus on Devolution (i.e. Local Government Restructure).

(293) Council **resolved** to:

- (i) limit invitations to engage with Buckland residents to elected representatives rather than invite any other Officers or Members to speak;
- (ii) accept an offer from SCC Cllr Clack to provide a brief overview, from SCC, as the lead authority in Surrey;
- (iii) use the meeting as an opportunity to invite comments and concerns from residents; and
- (iv) provide assurance to residents of Council's intention to keep residents updated as the process evolves.

Actions: Clerk to consult with SCC Cllr Clack and circulate links to any updates available ahead of the Annual Parish Meeting to Cllrs. Cllr Key to decline MVDC Cllr Cooksey's offer to speak to the meeting and relay Council's appreciation for the offer.

(294) Council **resolved** to make a donation of £130 to St Mary's Church, a value sufficient to fund the electricity cost for powering the floodlights to the church for the 2024/25 financial year.

(295) Council **resolved** to defer a proposal to schedule a volunteer event to remove brambles from alongside the footpath between Old Road and Bromley field to later in the year with a view to extending the planting of snowdrops early 2026. **Action:** Clerk.

(296) Council noted Cllr Jones, in advance of the Village Tidy and Litter Pick planned for Saturday 22nd March 2025:

- (i) had booked a litter collection by Amey for Monday 24th March 2025;
- (ii) is confident the stock of litter collecting equipment will be sufficient; and
- (iii) will prepare a risk assessment in advance of the event and take a register on the day.

Actions: Clerk/Cllr Jones to issue reminders via the village email group / Community WhatsApp group, respectively.

Grass cutting

(297) Council noted a one-year contract for grass cutting services for the period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026 had been entered into with Josh Flynn Gardening Services.

(298) Council **resolved** to record a vote of thanks to the:

- (i) IdVerde team who originally started work on the green on behalf of local firm G Burley and Sons Ltd in 2014 and remain responsible for grass cutting in the centre of the village until the end of March; and
- (ii) the support received from the local office team.

Flagpole

(299) Council **resolved** to record a vote of thanks to the Betchworth and Buckland Society for donating funds to allow the parish council to order a new flagpole and the aim is to install the flagpole in time for Easter.

8. Formalities

(300) Council noted the requested crime and incident report had recorded one crime and nine incidents between 13th January 2025 and 10th March 2025:

- (i) Crime: Vehicle collision when one car drove into the back of another at temporary traffic lights near The Pheasant resulting in one arrest for drink driving; and
- (ii) Incidents: three road traffic accidents on the A25 (three vehicle, two vehicle and motorcycle vs car), concern for safety for a man walking on railway tracks, a report of intruders gaining access to a secure site and trying to reposition CCTV cameras, an unsubstantiated report of a drunk driver on the A25, a car stop with advice given to driver, a report of cold callers in Rectory Lane offering new patios and a report of temporary traffic lights not working.

(301) Council noted a copy of Buckland Parochial Charity's draft accounts for the year to 31st December 2024 had been circulated in advance of the meeting and would be presented to the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting on 31st March 2025.

- (302) Council noted Cllr Jones had attended a forum of Surrey ALC Parish Cllrs on Wednesday 22nd January 2024 and was pleased to advise the topics highlighted, which had included the impending local government reorganisation, were already under discussion.
- (303) Council noted that Stuart McLachlan (Capel Parish Cllr) and Cllr Jones had each agreed to continue to serve as non-voting Parish Council representatives on the MVDC Standards Committee for the 2025/26 financial year. Council **resolved** to support the nomination of these two individuals.
- (304) Council noted the Clerk had recently responded to a Freedom of Information Request seeking information relating to the issue of Wild Animal Licences and that the response had advised that there is no information held to suggest any licences had been issued.

Re-Betchworth 4B's Biodiversity Initiative (Re-B4Bs) : Project Update

- (305) Council noted:
- (i) Cllr Jones had attended the final meeting of the Forum for this one-year project had been held on Wednesday 5th March 2025;
 - (ii) the Re-B4Bs Facilitation Team had circulated a paper in advance of the meeting setting out four options for the initiative;
 - (iii) the Forum members, having deliberated, concluded that there was no need for a Forum for an initiative that was essentially focused on engaging members of the 4Bs community in small scale habitat creation projects;
 - (iv) the biodiversity initiative will be sustained through interactions of an expanded team of willing volunteers and the 4Bs community, especially the members of the 4Bs WhatsApp Nature Group.
- (306) Council noted key information published within updates issued by the NALC, Surrey ALC, SCC (Consultation on Management of SCC Countyside Estate), MVDC, The River Mole Catchment Group, Surrey Hills Society and Gatwick Airport had been included within parish updates and/or used to update relevant sections of the village website.

9. Finance and Audit

Account Receipts and Payments

- (307) Council **resolved** to approve the following payments:
- (i) HMRC £140.96, PAYE liability re: February salary payment;
 - (ii) Hampshire Flag Company Ltd £515.93 including £85.99 Vat, Purchase glass fibre flagpole;
 - (iii) Start Safety £72.40 including £12.07 Vat, Safety equipment;
 - (iv) Clover Ground Maintenance £1,152 including £192.00 Vat, Winter maintenance cutting back surfaced footways;
 - (v) G Burley and Sons Ltd £127.72 including £21.30 Vat, Winter tidy of maintained areas of grass;
 - (vi) St Mary's Buckland Reading Room £69.00, Hall hire : 13th January 2025, 10th March 2025, and 31st March 2025;
 - (vii) Surrey Hills Society £30.00, Annual Membership;
 - (viii) Buckland Parochial Church Council £130.00, Contribution towards the cost of electricity re: floodlights to the church;
 - (ix) HMRC £140.96, PAYE liability re: March salary payment; and
 - (x) SOS Business Supplies £125.38 including £20.90 Vat, Toners and A4 paper.
- (308) Council noted:
- (i) Unity Bank had applied a monthly service charge of £6.00 to the current account on 31st January 2025 and 28th February 2025;
 - (ii) receipt of a donation of £515.93 from the Betchworth and Buckland Society.

Budget and Precept Request for the period April 2025 – March 2026

(309) Council noted:

- (i) budget schedules, updated to reflect the decisions taken at the January 2025 meeting had been circulated to Cllrs since that meeting;
- (ii) the explanatory notes attached to the budget schedule had noted that:
 - (a) no change to fees set in Council's Model Publication Scheme for provision of hard copy information in response to Freedom of Information Request were being made; and
 - (b) no other fees or charges are levied; and
- (iii) a year-to-date cash book, analysis of current year expenditure against budget, refreshed budget, asset register, and risk assessment schedule had been circulated.

(310) Council **resolved** to adopt:

- (i) the budget schedules dated 10th March 2025;
- (ii) asset register, updated to reflect the purchase of a new flagpole;
- (iii) risk assessment, updated to reflect the planned installation of the new flagpole;

and noted the asset valuations included on the asset register would be used when requesting quotes to renew the parish council insurance. Cllr Husband signed and dated the adopted schedules.

(311) Council noted a claim for a repayment of the Vat incurred between the 1st March 2024 and 28th February 2025 had been prepared for submission to HMRC.

(312) Council **resolved** to:

- (i) approve a grant of £384.00, to allow the volunteer webmaster to settle the Design Lynx annual charge for domain hosting, web space, disk space and bandwidth for bucklandsurrey.org.uk for the year commencing 1st April 2025;
- (ii) extend its current subscription to Zoom for a further year, at the advised cost of £77.94 including £12.99 Vat.

Action: Clerk to arrange payments upon receipt of appropriate paperwork.

Annual review of effectiveness

(313) In accordance with advice set out in the Practitioners Guide to Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England (2024), Council considered the effectiveness of its system of internal control and reviewed the measures in place to prevent and detect fraud and corruption.

(314) Council noted that the Financial Regulations had last been reviewed at the 2024 Annual Meeting and the next review is scheduled for May 2025.

(315) Council, having reviewed the recently circulated risk assessment schedule and audit plan concluded its system of internal control remains effective, its risk assessment is relevant and effective.

(316) Council, having given due consideration, **resolved** to re-adopt the current audit plan and to appoint Peter Barclay to continue as Council's Internal Auditor for the period covering the preparation and publication of the 2025 Annual Return (AGAR).

Action: Clerk to liaise with the internal auditor and issue letter of engagement.

10. Forthcoming Meetings

(317) The Parish Council will next meet on Monday 12th May 2025 and meetings are subsequently scheduled to be held in the Reading Room on the following dates:

2025: 14th July; 8th September; 10th November;

2026: 12th January; 9th March, 11th May, 13th July, 14th September and 9th November.

(318) Annual Parish Meetings will be held in the Reading Room and commence at 7.30pm on Monday 31st March 2025 and Monday 23rd March 2026.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.55pm.

Sheena Boyce, Clerk

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