

BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held at 8pm in the Reading Room on Monday 9th September 2024.

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

In attendance: The Clerk and one resident.

1. Apologies for Absence

- (116) Council **resolved** to accept apologies from Cllrs Pryor and Steed and noted apologies had also been received from Surrey County Council (SCC) Cllr Helyn Clack and Mole Valley District (MVDC) Cllrs Simon Budd, Paul Potter and Paula Keay.

2. Declarations of Interest

- (117) None.

3. Requests for Dispensations

- (118) None.

4. Minutes

- (119) Council **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th July 2024. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Cllr Jones assumed the role of chair.

5. Open Forum

- (120) A resident tabled an extract from an interactive map that had appeared within an article published by the Times newspaper group titled “Do you live near grey belt land”. Entering a Buckland postcode into the interactive map had brought up the waterbodies of Buckland Park Lake and Tapwood Quarry as grey belt land. Council noted a suggestion that many of the sites indicated on the map appear to be current or former mineral working sites and/or plots of publicly owned land previously earmarked for redevelopment. Notwithstanding this observation, the resident asked the parish council to investigate whether there might be a need to challenge the information being presented to prevent any risk of the data being normalised/adopted. Council asked the Clerk to consider what options might be available to Council. **Action:** Clerk.

Cllr Husband resumed as chair.

6. Highways

Highways – Maintenance

- (121) Council noted:
- (i) a copy of the recently readopted Policy on Signs and Road Markings had been forwarded to SCC Cllr Clack with a request for the policy to be shared with relevant Highways Officers and, in particular a request that no white edge or centre carriageway lines be refreshed on Lawrence Lane, Old Road or Rectory Lane;
 - (ii) SCC Cllr Clack had confirmed the information had been forwarded to the relevant teams.

Highways – A25 Road Safety Improvements

- (122) Council noted Cllr Steed had attended the drop in session scheduled on 11th July, as part of the consultation held on works due to be implemented shortly on West Street Reigate, and considered the event useful.
- (123) Council noted:
- (i) constructive meetings had been held in Buckland and Betchworth with the SCC team heading up implementation of the £1.8m package of DfT funded road safety improvements on the A25 between Reigate and Dorking and a date for a Brockham focused meeting is awaited; and
 - (ii) the team had been open to taking on board local knowledge and demonstrated a willingness to adapt their draft plans to take local needs into account;
- and **resolved** to record its appreciation to the SCC officers for taking the time to consult.

Highways – A25 Road Closures

(124) Council noted:

- (i) SCC Highways had recently established a critical taskforce to look to reduce the impact of utility roadworks and drive better coordination and communication of works across Surrey's road network;
- (ii) Council had written to SCC Cllr Jonathan Hully, setting out the concerns included in the minutes of the July meeting;
- (iii) the Clerk and SCC Cllr Clack had met with SCC Cllr Hully and agreed to Council's submission being tabled as a case study at the meeting of the task force held on 26th July; and
- (iv) provided a copy of the submission to the Road Safety team charged with delivering a package of road safety improvements works along the A25 between Reigate and Dorking with a restated request for the Road Safety and Maintenance teams to include the signage requests set out in the submission in the streetworks diversion plans for the upcoming works on West Street.

Action: Clerk to circulate a copy of the submission to all councillors.

(125) Council noted SCC Cllr Clack had relayed a query from SCC Highways Officers to ask whether Council would like to request the installation of blue advisory not suitable for HGV signs at each of the locations indicated on the recent submission. Council **resolved** to ratify the response issued, following consultation with Cllr Steed, that having reflected upon this offer, Council does not wish to submit a request for the following reasons:

- (i) When works are undertaken the installation of yellow advisory signage is perceived by drivers to take precedence over any blue advisory signs which the parish council believes will mean, in practice that any blue signs will be ignored and any absence of yellow temporary signs be seen as tacit permission; and
- (ii) the blue signs are not considered ordinarily necessary at these locations as most drivers travelling along these routes will ordinarily claim they are doing so to gain access to their destination. Installing such advisory signs would be seen as unnecessary urban clutter and be contrary to council's adopted decluttering policy.

Bus services

(126) Council noted that when highways officers were outlining the proposed road safety improvements for Buckland bends that the eastbound bus stop close to the driveway to Normanton, which has a layby pull in on Buckland bends is still an operational bus stop. Council **resolved** to ratify the request that had since been submitted to SCC Helyn Clack that had requested:

- (i) if this is the case please can the bus team be asked to install a bus sign and timetable to highlight to potential passengers that the bus stop is operational and when they can expect a service to arrive; and
- (ii) if the bus team believe the information given to the team progressing the DfT safety improvements on the A25 is incorrect then please can they clarify the status of the bus stop with that team to enable designs to make optimal use of the carriageway and layby without needing to allow for the bus stop.

Highways – Grass Cutting

(127) Council noted:

- (i) the grass cutting map published on the SCC website had now been corrected for Old Road, following the intervention of SCC Cllr Clack; and
- (ii) the reply from SCC Highways had included an apology for closing the enquiry without either responding to the request or issuing a response.

Action: All to encourage any residents who query grass cutting to check the grass cutting map, to submit a report to Surrey Highways if they believe there are any errors on the grass cutting map and to approach SCC Cllr Clack if they not happy with the response they receive from SCC Highways.

Highways – Street Cleaning

(128) Council noted:

- (i) Amey, the contractor appointed by MVDC to undertake street cleaning had advised that following a risk assessment, street cleaning to fully expose the sections of kerbing against grass verges, previously reported by Council as “ have been exposed, but not consistently” could not be completed without a road closure; and
- (ii) the contractual arrangements with MVDC do not make any provision for a road closure.

(129) Council further noted the Clerk had provided contact details for the Joint Waste Services (JWS) officers at MVDC to the SCC officers managing the Road Safety improvements on the A25 Reigate Road with a request the teams coordinate to ensure any opportunity to “bring the street cleaning up to contractual standard” is taken up.

(130) Council **resolved** to express its disappointment to Karen Brimacombe, MVDC Chief Executive and to ask her to support Council’s request for MVDC JWS to work proactively with SCC Highways to ensure any opportunities to address the sections of kerbing that have yet to be cleared of vegetation during the forthcoming works are taken. **Action:** Clerk.

Airports

(131) Council noted Cllr Cox had:

- (i) agreed to participate in a stakeholder information briefing on 23rd September 2024 which promises to provide an update on the:
 - (a) Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL/we) Airspace Change Proposal (ACP 2018-60^[1]) to redesign the arrival and departure routes that serve the airport’s operation in line with the UK’s Future Airspace Strategy Implementation (FASI) programme and UK Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS);
 - (b) splitting of the Gatwick ACP; and
 - (c) planned approach to consultation for the London Airspace South part of the proposal;and include a high level overview of the next steps for the later portion of the ACP;
- (ii) received an update from Heathrow airport that had advised Heathrow is entering a similar stage of its Airspace Change Proposal, and, given the current overflying of Buckland relates more to Heathrow departures than flight movements related to Gatwick airport, has started to review the recently published and substantive documentation.

7. Planning

(132) Council noted the following updates from the Clerk, following consultation with Cllrs who serve on the Planning Committee:

- (i) SCC 2024-0073: Change of use of boathouse and fishermen’s hut to permit land based recreation, in addition to their current permitted use in association with water based recreation activities, and external alterations to boathouse. Stationing of mobile polycarbonate domes (part-retrospective), installation of battery container and erection of fishermen’s kiosk, to be used in association with the approved water based recreation and proposed land-based outdoor recreation afteruse of the former silica sand quarry, known as Park Pit on Land at Buckland Park Lake, Park Drive, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH3 7FE. Council had confirmed to SCC that it had no objection to this application;

^[1] [Gatwick Redesign of departure and arrival routes and procedures ACP \(caa.co.uk\)](https://caa.co.uk/gatwick-redesign-of-departure-and-arrival-routes-and-procedures-ACP)

- (ii) MO/2024/0859: Conversion and change of use of barn to one dwelling house at Barn North of Wonham Lane, Wonham Lane, Betchworth, RH3 7AD. Council had submitted an objection to this application, consistent with the concerns expressed when the application to construct the barn and subsequent appeal were considered and included representations consistent with comparable applications; and
- (iii) MO/2024/1220: Prior notification for the erection of an agricultural storage barn of 22 metres x 9.10 metres at Crossways Kennels And Cattery, Crossways Farm, Station Road, Betchworth, RH3 7DF.
 - (a) Council, having reviewed the application had agreed to express concern about the potential impact of the metal structure positioned close to the kennels on:
 - the level of noise nuisance (from barking dogs) that might be generated by soundwaves being deflected by the metal shed across the local area and potentially amplified by the further deflection from the hills; and
 - the adverse impact the construction of the shed, in its proposed location, might have on the noise barrier the original owners created by planting conifers a short distance to the east of the kennels; especially given the current owners have since reduced the height of those trees.
 - (b) Council noted MVDC had since refused the application prior to the representation being submitted, Council **resolved** to write to MVDC Environmental Health to ask for its concerns to be registered to ensure they can be taken into account should a new application or an appeal application be submitted. **Action:** Clerk.

Planning Notifications

(133) Council noted the following Planning Authority notifications:

- (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. Approved with conditions;
- (ii) 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. Approved with conditions;
- (iii) MO/2024/0903: Remove one Walnut tree at Yewdells, Dungates Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BD. No objection;
- (iv) 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. Approved.
- (v) MO/2024/1220: Prior notification for the erection of an agricultural storage barn of 22 metres x 9.10 metres at Crossways Kennels And Cattery, Crossways Farm, Station Road, Betchworth, RH3 7DF. Refused.
- (vi) MO/2024/1226: Discharge of Conditions 4 and 7 of approved planning application MO/2022/1107 for the erection of new dwelling by utilising and extending existing double garage and store and demolishing existing barn, garage and out buildings at Yew Tree Cottage, Reigate Road, Buckland RH3 7BG. Conditions approved.

Planning Enforcement

(134) Council noted:

- (i) a breach of condition 7 attached to application MO/2001/1627 and the construction of hard standing and a bund on land in agricultural use had been brought to MVDC's attention; and

- (ii) updates are awaited on enforcement enquiries raised with respect to
 - (a) 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; and
 - (b) 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

(135) Council noted Surrey Community Action's Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) had:

- (i) Highlighted the publication of a Design Guide by English Rural (to coincide with Rural Housing week); and
- (ii) advised budget can be made available to undertake a Housing Needs analysis if this is something Council wishes to pursue.

Council **resolved** to expressed preference to the RHE to defer any Housing Needs analysis until such time as an opportunity to fulfil any identified need is being actively considered.

Action: Clerk.

(136) Council noted:

- (i) in 2023 Natural England held a statutory and public consultation for a proposed extension to the Surrey Hills National Landscape;
- (ii) Natural England recently published the outcome of the consultation and analysis process;
- (iii) some, but not all of the parish is proposed for inclusion within the enlarged Surrey Hills National Landscape;
- (iv) as Natural England is proposing the inclusion of areas of land not highlighted during last year's consultation, a further consultation limited to these newly proposed areas will be launched on Tuesday 17th September 2024 and will last for 12 weeks, ending on the 10th December 2024;
- (v) details of webinars being held to explain the consultation and help people consider their responses have been included within an update published as a news item on the village website;
- (vi) further legal processes will follow in 2025 prior to submitting a variation order to the Secretary of State for consideration and, hopefully approval; and
- (vii) as the Secretary of State may choose to confirm the Order, confirm the Order with amendments, or reject the Order and may call a Public Inquiry to assist in their decision making in relation to whether the designation should be confirmed or not or be amended the timescale remains uncertain.

(137) Council noted:

- (i) a consultation had been launched on a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- (ii) the proposals include a return to a mandatory housing target for each planning authority, the introduction of "grey belt" and a requirement for planning authorities, should they be unable to meet new housing targets to release green belt land to enable the target to be met;
- (iii) the number of new dwellings per year projected in the MVDC Regulation 19 local plan (currently with the Planning Inspectorate) is 340 versus a previously non mandatory annual target of 460 new dwellings; and

- (iv) the 2024 NPPF proposes a mandatory annual target of 757 new dwellings, and, as the MVDC target of 340 is more than 200 dwellings short of the new target, MVDC will be required, upon adoption of its new local plan, to commence plan-making in the new plan-making system at the earliest opportunity to address the shortfall in housing need.

Council **resolved** to write to MVDC to ask MVDC to fully consult and work collaboratively with parish councils prior to publishing any proposals to address the shortfall in housing need, whether by adopting changes to parish settlement hierarchies, parish village boundaries or by adopting new criteria for site selection, to ensure MVDC can gain from local knowledge.

8. Communications and Consultations

(138) Council noted the requested crime and incident report had recorded six crimes and seven incidents between 8th July 2024 and 9th September 2024.

- (i) Crimes: three instances of shoplifting and one assault on staff at Shell Waitrose and two altercations (one on Lawrence Lane and one at The Pheasant); and
- (ii) Incidents: two road traffic accidents without injury; a two vehicle collision on Old Road near the Red Lion and a vehicle collision with a property boundary on Old Road that led to arrest for driving offences, an incidence of trespass on estate land, a vehicle stop that resulted in an arrest for driving under the influence, and individual reports of an unauthorised drone flight, explosions (thought likely to be fireworks), and general speeding issues.

Surrey Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity

(139) Council, having reviewed a working paper issued by the 4Bs Biodiversity Working Group (BWG), **resolved** to:

- (i) express its thanks to the BWG for offering opportunities to residents living across the 4Bs to participate in activities that promote a greater understanding of Biodiversity and an appreciation for actions they can take within their own gardens;
- (ii) restate its request for guidelines to be issued when the BWG launches Biodiversity initiatives to make it clear any information gathered should not involve unauthorised access onto private land and should not broadcast the presence of rare and/or protected species to the wider public;
- (iii) suggest to the BWG that rather than try to adopt a land based scope for this Biodiversity initiative to focus on creating and supporting a network of people whose understanding of Biodiversity and knowledge and appreciation for nature can be enhanced by participating in the types of activities the BWG has been arranging over recent months; and
- (iv) propose adoption of the name 4Bs Biodiversity Network for this initiative.

(140) Council noted:

- (i) the draft Surrey Nature Recovery Strategy, a document it was hoped would shortly be available is now predicted (on the SCC consultation website) to be published in Spring 2025; and
- (ii) Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), defined some time ago, are still expected to be central to the strategy.

Council **resolved** to:

- (i) advise the BWG Council does not support the creation of a 4Bs Biodiversity Park as Council does not believe there is a need to ascribe an additional land based designation to land in Buckland and remains concerned that the proposed use of the word “Park” would be misleading and could lead to potential conflict between land owners, farmer, and members of the public; and
- (ii) put forward a counter proposal to encourage the BWG to focus on building a 4Bs Biodiversity Network, and, as part of that initiative to recruit volunteers to be prepared to undertake specific tasks, consistent with the aims and objectives of the yet to be published Surrey Nature Recovery Strategy under the direction and close supervision of the relevant landowner for each task.

- (141) Council acknowledged there is a degree of confusion amongst residents living in Buckland as to the extent they can participate in events and activities that are promoted under the Re-Betchworth banner. Council **resolved** to ask the BWG to work with Re-Betchworth to clarify communications.

Action: Clerk to ensure feedback is provided to the BWG ahead of the October meeting of the steering group. Cllr Jones to ensure Council's position is reflected in any discussion at the forthcoming meeting of the Biodiversity steering group.

- (142) Council, noted an approach from "The Walk and Talk Movement", an initiative that encourages communities to encourage volunteers to arrange regular local walks to promote wellbeing had been shared with a resident who leads regular walks as part of Walking for Health and occasional guided walks for the Betchworth and Buckland Society.
- (143) Council noted updates issued by the NALC, Surrey ALC, SCC, MVDC, Mole Valley Community Forum, Surrey Wildlife Trust, the River Mole Catchment Partnership, Surrey Hills Society, GACC and Gatwick Airport had been circulated to Cllrs with key information published within the relevant sections of the village website and/or included within parish updates.

9. Events and Amenities

- (144) Council noted two pond clearance events had been held since the July meeting and **resolved** to record votes of thanks to:
- (i) each and every resident who turned out to help at one or more of the two pond clearance events led by the Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers (RACV) on Sunday 18th August and Sunday 1st September 2024;
 - (ii) Simon Elson for leading the events, guiding the collective effort to manage the pond and providing feedback following this year's events;
 - (iii) the RACV members who turn up to help in Buckland; and
 - (iv) Buckland Estate for use of the trailer at each of the events.
- (145) Council **resolved** to make a donation of £100 to the RACV to express appreciation for their support and to draw on Simon Elson's feedback on the events for the update to be published in the November parish magazine. **Action:** Clerk.

10. Finance

Account Payments and Receipts

- (146) Council **resolved** to approve the following payments:
- (i) G Burley and Sons Ltd £330.55 including £55.09 Vat, May and June grass cutting;
 - (ii) Society of Local Council Clerks £183.00, Annual membership fee;
 - (iii) HMRC £130.44, PAYE liability re: August salary payment;
 - (iv) G Burley and Sons Ltd £110.18 including £18.36 Vat, July grass cutting;
 - (v) G Burley and Sons Ltd £110.18 including £18.36 Vat, August grass cutting;
 - (vi) Surrey ALC £72.00 including £12.00 Vat, Attendance at 2024 Surrey ALC and Conference;
 - (vii) Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers £100, Donation to support ongoing RACV activity; and
 - (viii) HMRC £130.44, PAYE liability re: September salary payment.
- (147) Council noted that £10,540.23, comprising the second instalment of 2024/25 precept (£8,883.23), concurrent grant (£1,195.00) and council tax support grant (£462.00) had been received into the Parish Council bank account between 8th July 2024 and 9th September 2024.

- (148) Council noted financial schedules circulated in advance of the meeting had included a year-to-date cash book, an analysis of forecast versus budget expenditure and a bank reconciliation.
- (149) Council noted PKF Littlejohn LLP (external auditor for all parish councils located in Surrey), had, on 3rd August 2024, confirmed they had received and logged the notification of exempt status for the year ended 31 March 2024 submitted by Council.

11. Forthcoming Meetings

- (150) The Parish Council will next meet on Monday 11th November 2024 and meetings are subsequently scheduled to be held in the Reading Room on the following dates:
2025: 13th January, 10th March; 12th May; 14th July; 8th September; 10th November;
2026: 12th January; 9th March.
- (151) The Clerk will attend a meeting of the Surrey Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks to be held in Smallfield on Monday 29th September 2024 and a virtual meeting of Mole Valley Clerks on Wednesday 2nd October 2024;
- (152) Cllr Cox will attend an online stakeholder information briefing on the Gatwick Airport Limited Airspace Change Proposal on Monday 23rd September 2024;
- (153) Cllr Jones will attend a meeting of the 4Bs Biodiversity Initiative Steering Group on Wednesday 9th October 2024.
- (154) Cllr Pryor will attend the River Mole Catchment Partnership Annual Event at West Horsley Place on Thursday 10th October 2024;
- (155) Cllr Husband and the Clerk 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.
- (156) 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 10.30p.m.

Sheena Boyce, Clerk

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