

BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

In attendance: Mole Valley District (MVDC) Cllrs Budd, Keay, and Potter, Surrey County Council (SCC) Cllr Helyn Clack, and the Clerk.

1. Apologies for Absence

(105) Council **resolved** to accept apologies from Cllrs Pryor, Gowrley and Cox.

2. Declarations of Interest

(106) None.

3. Requests for Dispensations

(107) None.

4. Minutes and Agenda

(108) Council **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th July 2025. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. Planning

New Planning Applications

- (109) MO/2025/02039: Replacement of roof and wall cladding with alterations to fenestration and installation of Photovoltaic Panels to the roof at Royce Service & Engineering Works, Station Road, Betchworth, Surrey, RH3 7BZ. Council **resolved** to submit an objection to this application and to ask MVDC Cllr Keay to request the application be determined by the MVDC Development Management Committee. **Action:** Clerk.
- (110) MO/2025/02124: Demolition of existing outbuildings and the erection of a single storey dwelling at Holmecroft, Pebble Hill Road, Betchworth, RH3 7BW. Council **resolved** not to comment on this application.
- (111) Council noted Dalcour McLaren (DM), acting as agent for SES Water had advised Council that due to a requirement to change the scope of the project, SES Water had decided to
- (i) defer work on common land to the east of Rectory Lane to 2026; and
 - (ii) take forward the S.38 consent this year to allow sufficient time to obtain it in advance of work commencing next year. **Action:** Clerk to monitor.

Planning Enforcement

(112) Council noted MVDC had advised no progress to report since the last meeting.

Planning Policy

- (113) Council noted MVDC had, on 22nd July 2025, adopted three Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):
- (i) Extending Your House: Design Guidance for House Extensions and Outbuildings;
 - (ii) Affordable Housing; and
 - (iii) Planning Obligations.

Planning – Community Engagement

- (114) Council noted:
- (i) Cllr Bourke had registered to attend the second six-monthly in person MVDC Development Management Community Engagement Meeting between 10am and noon on Thursday 11th September 2025;
 - (ii) Cllr Bourke had taken the opportunity to submit questions in advance of the forum, responses to which had been issued and asked the team to provide guidance as to how to get the best out of the recently relaunched planning portal.
- Council **resolved** to record a vote of thanks to Cllr Bourke for investing time ahead of the forum and making the time to attend this daytime meeting.

6. Highways, Rights of Way and Trains

Highways – Maintenance

Standing orders suspended to allow SCC Cllr Clack to participate in this item

(115) Council noted:

- (i) following an onsite meeting between SCC Cllr Clack and the Clerk that SCC Cllr Clack had submitted a request for a return visit to be made by the maintenance team to undertake footway edging between the driveways to Park Cottage and Buckland Court; and
- (ii) upon hearing no visit had yet been made SCC Cllr Clack agreed to issue a follow up request. **Action:** SCC Cllr Clack.

Highways - A25 Safety Improvement Work

- (116) Council resolved to record a vote of thanks to the team undertaking the improvement work for providing Council with an opportunity to review proposed road signage (due to be installed 22nd-27th September) along the A25 Reigate Road and for incorporating Council's feedback into the scheme.
- (117) SCC Cllr Clack informed Council that several residents had expressed concern that the installation of an average speed zone on the A25 Reigate Road will increase the volume of traffic using Old Road and undermine road safety for all users who share this carriageway.
- (118) SCC Cllr Clack acknowledged that Council had raised this as a potential concern for residents when the scheme was first introduced at a meeting held in July 2024 and Cllr Steed referred to the pre-commencement survey the team had undertaken and the post implementation survey the team has promised will be scheduled upon completion of all aspects of the scheme through Buckland.
- (119) Council acknowledged that until we have before and after statistics it will be difficult to provide evidence based assurance to residents.

National Highways – Use of local road network to facilitate works on the M25

- (120) Cllr Bourke expressed concern about the adverse impact heavy night time traffic is having on the quality of sleep of residents living close to the A25 Reigate Road. Cllr Steed shared his recent surprise, having had occasion to be immediately outside his home at c.3am, a property over 500 metres from the A25 Reigate Road, at how noisy the lorries were.
- (121) Cllr Bourke asked whether the number of licences for road closures being granted to National Highways could be reviewed to establish how much of the work could be completed under lane closures. SCC Cllr Clack invited Council to submit a request to her to enquire as to whether the promised pushback (promise to push for lane closures and to limit diversion to the A25 Reigate Road to very high sided vehicles) has been deprioritised. **Action:** Clerk
- (122) Council asked SCC Cllr Clack whether it might be possible that a preference for work being undertaken between junctions 8 and 9 to be completed as quickly as possible to minimise any adverse impact on residents living near the motorway is resulting in more licences for road closures being granted to the detriment of residents living close to the A25 Reigate Road diversion route. SCC Cllr Clack suggested Council submit a question for her to put to highways officers. **Action:** Clerk

Standing orders resumed.

Rights of Way

- (123) Council, noted SCC Countryside Access had confirmed that a recent deposit, made by The South London Church Fund and Southwark Diocesan Board of Finance under section 31(6) of the Highways Act 1980 and section 15A(1) of the Commons Act 2006:
 - (i) comprised of a Highways Declaration and Landowner Statement for various plots of land in Mole Valley, including Buckland; and
 - (ii) will not have any impact on discussions underway relating to a proposal to divert a public footpath which crosses one of those parcels of land.

Trains

(124) Council noted:

- (i) Cllr Steed had received written assurance from Network Rail that notwithstanding the NFF code ascribed to the incident reported in June that the incident had been fully investigated and the level crossing deemed safe;
- (ii) A parish update had included a cautionary update encouraging anyone using the level crossing to remain vigilant, to report any concerns to Network Rail and the parish council.

(125) Council noted receipt of:

- (i) Advance warning issued by GWR of a two week closure of the North Downs Railway, (Posted on village website); and
- (ii) Minutes of the latest meeting of the North Downs Railway Steering Group.

7. Amenities and Volunteer Activities

First Aid Training

(126) Council noted the Community First Responders, who had been approached to run a CPR training course in the village this autumn were struggling to identify potential dates.

Action: Cllr Jones to continue to liaise in the hope a date will soon emerge.

8. Consultations and Communications

Local Government Reorganisation

(127) Council noted:

- (i) the Clerk had attended a workshop convened to gather a mix of elected members, community voices and representatives of statutory bodies (e.g. police, fire, health housing) to discuss the purpose and goals of a Neighbourhood Area Committee (NAC) and consider what a NAC might look like once unitary councils are in place;
- (ii) the workshop had allocated attendees to one of four tables, each of which was supported by a facilitator and a note taker and had required each table to address and respond to a series of questions;
- (iii) the group of attendees seated on the same table as the Clerk had questioned the role of the NACs, expressed concern as to how all communities can be effectively represented given one of the stated goals was to limit membership to 21 individuals and queried the rationale of aligning community boundaries to district boundaries given they will cease to exist once unitaries are in place;
- (iv) no-one in the room was supportive of the community grouping being referred to as a committee, given it does not appear to have any decision making powers or allocated budget; and
- (v) the SCC team leading the workshop advised the NAC will meet monthly between September and December to enable feedback to be provided to central government early in 2026.

(128) Council noted:

- (i) SCC had, by way of follow up to the workshop, issued an invitation to all 13 parish councils located in the proposed Dorking and Villages NAC to nominate one parish councillor to attend a meeting at which a single representative would be selected to attend NAC meetings;
- (ii) A response had been submitted, by the 15th August deadline which had set out, by reference to the legislation governing how parish councils operate, how unworkable the proposal was, advised that the identity of the nominated parish councillor would need to be confirmed once a date and time had been confirmed for the initial meeting and outlined what advance information would be needed to be tabled before the parish council if the nominated attendee was to be able to do anymore than observe proceedings and report back to Council;
- (iii) Surrey ALC had expressed thanks for sight of the response, the content of which they had advised matched the feedback they had submitted to SCC; and

- (iv) the only communication received subsequent to the 15th August was a notification of an extension of the deadline to 29th August.
- (129) Council **resolved** to authorise the Clerk, should a meeting date and time be confirmed, to liaise with Cllrs to determine who might be best placed to attend and to communicate the name of the proposed attendee to SCC.
- (130) Council noted an invitation to attend a SCC led online seminar on Tuesday 9th September, for an update on the establishment of NACs had been circulated and Cllr Jones had registered to attend.

Community Governance Review

- (131) Council noted MVDC had launched a district wide Community governance review and, having reviewed the consultation **resolved** to submit a response to advise MVDC that Council does not consider a review appropriate in Buckland prior to implementation of the currently proposed Local Government Reorganisation. **Action:** Clerk.

MVDC Cllrs Budd, Keay and Potter left meeting.

Standing orders suspended to allow SCC Cllr Clack to participate in the next item.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- (132) Council noted SCC had launched a public consultation on its draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), a new plan to protect and restore nature across the county. Council resolved to record a vote for thanks to Cllr Bourke for reviewing the draft and circulating a succinct summary.
- (133) Council, having considered the draft LNRS, **resolved** to concur with Cllr Bourke's expressed concern that whilst the aspirations set out in the strategy are laudable there is very little tangible guidance Council can draw upon to help inform its future actions or point enthusiastic volunteers towards to ensure any actions taken deliver measurable benefit and cause no harm to valuable habitat.
- (134) Council **resolved** not to respond to consultation on the draft LNRS on the basis that to do so is not within Council's area of expertise.
- (135) SCC Cllr Clack, having listened to the discussion suggested SCC Cllr Marissa Heath, Cabinet Member for the Environment, would be interested to hear Council's views. Council **resolved** to nominate Cllr Bourke to extend an offer to speak with SCC Cllr Heath to share the views expressed during this meeting.

Standing orders resumed.

Surrey Police

- (136) Council noted that following recent engagement with the local neighbourhood team the Clerk had received:
- (i) assurance our local police are working proactively to address incidents on Buckland Estate land;
 - (ii) an explanation for an apparent mismatch between the bimonthly crime report and a locally prepared log; and
 - (iii) a commitment to amend the procedure for compiling the bimonthly report to ensure it is more representative.
- (137) Council noted the requested crime report had included eleven items between 14th July and 8th September 2025: two vehicle stops resulting in vehicle seizures (no insurance and no full licence), two thefts (alcohol from Shell and a pedal cycle from The Pheasant) and individual instances of attempted break-in to residential garages, concern for safety (resolved), report of fighting on Shell forecourt, domestic incident, neighbour dispute, trespass and anti-social behaviour (noisy motorcycles on A25).

SCC Cllr Clack left the meeting.

Royal Mail

(138) Council noted:

- (i) a request had been issued to Cllr Keay to seek support from both MVDC Cabinet and our local MP to secure regular postal deliveries from Dorking sorting office to all Buckland residents with RH3 postcodes;
- (ii) residents are being routinely required to visit Dorking sorting office to collect post as deliveries are now less frequent than once per week;
- (iii) no deliveries were made during the period the regular postie was on two and a half weeks annual leave and it is understood the post delivered to Dorking was not sorted during the period of leave;
- (iv) a change of round took effect before the backlog had been cleared, leaving the round without any permanent cover;
- (v) residents have been encouraged to submit claims when post is finally collected and/or delivered late and to write to our MVDC Cllrs and local MP to impress upon them the need for action.

Other communication

(139) Council noted:

- (i) the existence of SES Water funding to help non-profitable organisations to implement water saving initiatives had been highlighted to the church wardens and local cricket club;
- (ii) an approach from SCC querying the potential demand for warm welcome schemes in the south of Mole Valley had been shared with the Clerk to Buckland Village Charity.

(140) Council noted updates issued by Surrey ALC, SCC, Surrey Hills, MVDC, Gatwick Airport and GACC had been circulated to Cllrs and key information published within parish updates.

9. Finance

(141) Council noted PKF Littlejohn LLP (external auditor for all parish councils located in Surrey), had, on 5th August 2025, confirmed they had received and logged the notification of exempt status for the year ended 31 March 2025 submitted by Council.

(142) Council noted:

- (i) the Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2025 had increased hourly rates of pay by 3.20% with effect from 1st April 2025 and encouraged employers to implement the pay award as swiftly as possible;
- (ii) the pay agreement increases the hourly rate of pay from £19.20 to £19.81.

Account Payments and Receipts

(143) Council noted Unity Bank had applied a £6 monthly charge to the current account on 31st July 2025 and 31st August 2025.

(144) Council **resolved** to approve the following payments:

- (i) Cartridge People £101.89 including £16.98 Vat, Drum units for Brother printer;
- (ii) Sheena Boyce £90.58, Nationally set salary increase backdated to 1st April;
- (iii) HMRC £39.90, PAYE liability on backdated salary increase;
- (iv) Josh Flynn Gardening Service £102.00 including £17.00 Vat, Grass cutting – one cut during July;
- (v) HMRC £261.25, PAYE liability re: August salary payment; and
- (vi) Josh Flynn Gardening Service £306.00 including £51.00 Vat, Grass cutting – two cuts during August plus one off strimming;
- (vii) SLCC £190.00, annual membership fee;

- (viii) Sheena Boyce £73.00, Reimbursement council expenses;
- (ix) HP store £729.59 including £121.60 Vat, Windows 11 Pro laptop;
- (x) Surrey ALC £96.00 including £16.00 Vat, Attendance at 2025 Surrey ALC and Conference;
- (xi) HMRC £261.45, PAYE liability re: September salary payment.

(145) Council noted:

- (i) £11,018.00, comprising the second instalment of 2025/26 precept (£9,361.00), concurrent grant (£1,195.00) and council tax support grant (£462.00);
- (ii) £37.50 donation, raised by the sale of walk booklets

had been received into the Parish Council bank account between 14th July 2025 and 8th September 2025.

10. Forthcoming Meetings

(146) The Parish Council will next meet on Monday 10th November 2025 and meetings are subsequently scheduled to be held in the Reading Room on the following dates:

2026: 12th January; 9th March, 11th May, 13th July, 14th September and 9th November;
2027: 11th January and 8th March.

- (147) Cllr Jones will attend the SCC led online update on the pilot of Neighbourhood Area Committees on Tuesday 9th September 2025.
- (148) Cllr Bourke will attend a MVDC Development Management Community Engagement Meeting on Thursday 11th September 2025 at MVDC Pippbrook offices.
- (149) Cllr Pryor will attend the Surrey Wildlife Trust led River Mole Catchment Annual Update on Wednesday 1st October 2025 at the Wells Community Centre Epsom.
- (150) Cllr Cox will attend the Gatwick Airspace Fayre on Wednesday 1st October 2025 at Gatwick Airport's Stem Centre.
- (151) The Clerk will attend the Surrey Association of Local Councils Clerks Online Forum on Tuesday 30th September and MVDC Clerks Online Forum on Wednesday 1st October 2025.
- (152) Cllr Jones will attend the Surrey Association of Local Councils Councillor Online Forum on Wednesday 1st October 2025.
- (153) Cllr Husband and the Clerk will attend the Surrey Branch of the National Association of Local Councils AGM and Autumn Briefing on Thursday 13th November 2025 in Cobham.
- (154) The 2026 Annual Parish Meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 23rd March 2026 in the Reading Room.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.10p.m.

Sheena Boyce, Clerk

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