

BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held at 8pm in the Reading Room on Monday 12th January 2026.

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

In attendance: Mole Valley District (MVDC) Cllr Budd and the Clerk.

1. Apologies for Absence

(203) Council **resolved** to accept apologies from Cllrs Cox and Steed and noted apologies from Surrey County Council (SCC) Cllr Helyn Clack and MVDC Cllr Keay.

2. Declarations of Interest

(204) None.

3. Requests for Dispensations

(205) None.

4. Minutes and Agenda

(206) Council **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th November 2025. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. Formalities and Finance

(207) Council noted Rupert Gowrley had resigned, a Notice of Vacancy had been displayed on the Parish Council Notice Board, MVDC Electoral Service Team had been advised.

(208) Council noted:

- (i) Cllr Jones had verified the bank balances entered on the Q3 bank reconciliation against the bank statements, and having reviewed the cashbook against the bank reconciliation, signed the cashbook to confirm no anomalies had arisen between 1st October 2025 and 31st December 2025; and
- (ii) 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.

Account Payments and Receipts

(209) Council noted Unity Bank had applied a £6 monthly charge to the current account on each of 30th November and 31st December 2025 and £184.03 Q3 interest to the instant access saver account on 31st December 2025.

(210) Council **resolved** to renew membership of:

- (i) NALC via its Surrey ALC branch for 2026/27 for a fee of £216.01 (2025/26 £212.24);
- (ii) the Surrey Hills Society for 2026/27 for a fee of £30.00; and
- (iii) Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) for a five year fee of £50.00.

Action: Clerk, upon receipt of relevant paperwork, to arrange payment.

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

- (i) Josh Flynn Gardening Service £204.00 including £34.00 Vat, Grass cutting – two cuts during November;
- (ii) B&Q plc £126.83 including £21.14 Vat, Amenity repairs to bus shelter;
- (iii) Royal Mail Group £445.80 including £74.30 Vat, PO Box annual fee;
- (iv) Cartridge People £146.76 including £24.46 Vat, Toners;
- (v) HMRC £261.45, PAYE liability re: salary payments in December;

- (vi) Sheena Boyce £14.90 including Vat, Reimbursement council expenses;
- (vii) Nigel Husband £14.85, Reimbursement re mileage to attend Surrey ALC AGM and Conference;
- (viii) HMRC £261.25, PAYE liability re: salary payments in January.

(212) Council:

- (i) **resolved** to approve the continued payment of the annual registration fee to the Information Commissioner's Office by Direct Debit (DD) via Unity Trust Bank, for a further two year period; and
- (ii) noted the £47.00 annual fee, that reflects a £5 discount for payment by DD, is due to be debited on 15th January 2026.

Budget and Precept Request for the period April 2026 – March 2027

(213) Council noted a draft budget accompanied by a schedule of explanatory notes and draft assumptions and a copy of the latest full year forecast to 31st March 2026 that had included an analysis of forecast versus budget expenditure, a year-to-date cash book, and a bank reconciliation had been circulated to Cllrs accompanied by a “wish list” of potential expenditure proposals relating to amenity improvements.

(214) Council noted the Finance team at MVDC had recently:

- (i) notified a local tax base for Buckland Parish of £312.58 for 2026/27 compared to £305.00 for 2025/26;
- (ii) advised Council the value of the 2026/27 concurrent service payment will not include any inflationary increase. MVDC suggests it would be reasonable, for the purposes of preparing parish budgets, to assume the 2026/27 figure will remain the same as the 2025/26 figure of £2,390;
- (iii) informed Council that notwithstanding the prior year advice that a review of the council tax support scheme to ensure benefits paid out are wholly funded by monies received by MVDC from 2026/27 onwards would mean that 2025/26 would be the last year a council tax support scheme payment would be paid, that it would now be reasonable, for the purposes of preparing parish budgets, to assume the 2026/27 figure will remain the same as the 2025/26 figure of £924;
- (iv) informed Council that as 2026/27 will be the last year of operation for MVDC that it would be prudent to assume it will also be the last year a council tax support scheme payment or concurrent service payment will be received by parish councils.

(215) Council, having reviewed the current year forecast and draft budget, **resolved** to acknowledge:

- (i) given the continuing upward pressure on many elements of “cost of living” a need to fully justify any discretionary spending;
- (ii) as the East Surrey Unitary Authority will face financial challenges and remain subject to economic uncertainty, it is reasonable to anticipate a continued need for the Parish Council to ensure it can meet the needs of the parish whilst maintaining appropriate financial reserves;
- (iii) that as the Unitary Authority elections are scheduled for May 2026 this will leave parish councils elections the only elections currently scheduled for May 2027 and MVDC had deferred a request for an indication of the likely full cost of a contested parish council election in May 2027 (i.e. the cost to the parish council) to the as yet to be elected Unitary Authority;
- (iv) the need to remain mindful that if the government decides to extend referendum principles to parish councils (by capping year on year increases in parish council tax) such a change would limit Council's ability to increase the precept in future years without incurring the significant but as yet unconfirmed cost of a referendum.

(216) Council **resolved**:

- (i) to budget £750 discretionary spend on amenity improvements for the 2026/27 budget year;
- (ii) to allocate a budget for discretionary expenditure of £195 to fund a donation to the church to contribute to the electricity charge for floodlighting and to renew Council's membership of Surrey Hills Society and GACC; and
- (iii) to budget to continue to complement work the SCC Highways team undertake by funding "complementary maintenance of sections of footways alongside the A25 with an intact surface", to ensure the investment that has already been made to improve the A25 footways continues to be safeguarded until such time as SCC Highways can be persuaded to invest in further footway reconstruction.

(217) Council, having reviewed the draft budget, comprising a financial projection, proposals wishlist, explanatory notes and assumptions, noted:

- (i) an invitation to propose amenity improvements, featured in a parish update issued to residents via the email group and published in the parish magazine, had not led to any unfulfilled proposals;
- (ii) the current and projected levels of general (unallocated) reserves, whilst in accordance with the advice in the Practitioner's Guide ("the generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority's general (unallocated) reserve is that it should be maintained at between 3 and 12 months net expenditure" and "The smaller the authority, the closer the figure may be to 12 months expenditure, the larger the authority, the nearer to 3 months") remain modest; and
- (iii) applying an increase of no more than 5% to the 2025/26 Band D precept of £61.38, taking into account the need for the Band D precept to be divisible by nine, would:
 - a) result in a 2026/27 Band D precept of £64.44 (4.99% vs 2025/26); and
 - b) based upon the local tax base of £312.58, raise a precept of £20,142.66.

(218) Council **resolved** to:

- (i) set budgeted expenditure for the 2026/27 financial year at £23,457; and
- (ii) submit a precept request for the 2026/27 financial year of £20,142.66, the value required to balance the 2026/27 budget.

Action: Clerk to submit the precept request, signed by Cllrs Husband and Jones, to MVDC

6. Planning

New Planning Applications

(219) Council noted an update from the Clerk that following consultation with Cllrs who serve on the Planning Committee no comments had been submitted for the following applications:

- (i) MO/2025/02688: Erection of single storey rear extension, main roof alterations and oak front porch, following the removal of existing conservatory at Heathlands, Old Road, Buckland, RH3 7DU;
- (ii) MO/2025/02693: Remove 1 No. sycamore tree at The North Tower, Buckland Court Stables, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH3 7EA; and
- (iii) RB25/02066: Single storey side extension and two pitched roof dormers to side elevation at Harolyn Cliftons Lane, Reigate RH2 9RA.

Planning Notifications

(220) Council noted the following Planning Authority notifications:

- (i) MO/2024/2042: Retention of an outbuilding being used as an independent dwelling at Rose Barn, Reigate Heath, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH2 8QP. Appeal lodged.

- (ii) MO/2025/0384: Erection of a self-build dwelling and associated works on land East of Tranquil House, Old Reigate Road, Betchworth, RH3 7DR. Appeal lodged.
- (iii) MO/2025/02039 : Replacement of roof and wall cladding with alterations to fenestration and installation of Photovoltaic Panels to the roof at Ranmore Service and Engineering Works, Station Road, Betchworth, RH3 7BZ. This application was withdrawn from the agenda of the MVDC Development Management held on 7th January 2026 to allow more consideration of issues and concerns.
- (iv) MO/2025/02484: Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development in respect of a Listed Building for the refitting of existing kitchen & utility room with new flooring, cabinets and wall cupboards at Yewdells, Dungates Lane, Buckland RH3 7BD. Certificate issued.
- (v) MO/2025/02550: Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development in respect of the erection of a single storey side extension and installation of door and window to front elevation at Yew Tree Cottage, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH3 7BG. Certificate issued.
- (vi) MO/2025/02574: Crown lift willow tree to 3 metres for pedestrian clearance. Crown reduce willow tree by approximately 2-3 metres back to old pruning points only by removing limbs no greater than 75mm in diameter at Buckland Village Green, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH3 7EF. No objection.
- (vii) MO/2025/02688: Erection of single storey rear extension, main roof alterations and oak front porch, following the removal of existing conservatory at Heathlands, Old Road, Buckland, RH3 7DU. Approved with conditions.

Planning Enforcement

(221) 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 is being 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 was in June 2024 at which time the owner of the site had sought Council's input pursuant to preparing a planning application.

and MVDC had recently advised there are no further updates available. **Action:** Clerk to continue to monitor.

7. Airports and Highways

Airports - DCO

(222) Council noted:

- (i) the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC), working with its legal team, following its submission of a legal challenge to the High Court had since been advised four days court time had been allocated in January 2026 to hear the claim;
- (ii) Betchworth Parish Council had invited Buckland residents to attend a public meeting it hosted on 8th January 2026, at which representatives from GACC and its legal team spoke;
- (iii) Peter Barclay, GACC had accepted Council's invitation to speak to the village at the 2026 Annual Parish Meeting on 23rd March 2026; and
- (iv) Cllr Husband had submitted an article, published in the January edition of the parish magazine, to provide an update to the village and generate interest in attending the Annual Parish Meeting.

- (223) Council **resolved** to continue to focus its effort on taking steps to ensure residents are sufficiently informed about the legal challenges underway and GACC's related fundraising campaign to consider making individual donations.

Highways – Road Safety Work

- (224) Council noted the communication issued in advance of work to replace edge of carriageway road markings with raised rib road markings had been inadequate:
- (i) information published on the public facing website had been partial and substantively inconsistent with the information available to the highways engineers managing the scheme;
 - (ii) letters had been hand delivered on a seemingly ad-hoc basis by an officer who had been inadequately briefed to be able to give meaningful responses to sensible questions; and
 - (iii) Businesses had been told their customers would be unable to access the premises after 8pm prompting cancellation concerns during the important pre Christmas trading period.

Action: Clerk to share concerns with SCC Cllr Clack and submit a formal request for any written communication due to be handed out in Buckland to be shared with Council to aid clear communication to all the local community.

- (225) Council noted:
- (i) a consultation on a proposed reduction in the speed limit on the lower section of B2032 to the north of Betchworth roundabout from 40mph to 30 mph had been launched and a link to the consultation had been published on the village website;
 - (ii) the consultation drawings consist of line drawings to show the extent of the speed limit change;
 - (iii) the consultation drawings do not include any drawing to explain the proposed changes to road signs or street furniture, the installation of an uncontrolled crossing or the potential installation of a vehicles activated sign; and

resolved to submit a response to the consultation to express no objection to the proposed reduction in speed limit and to engage directly with the Road Safety team to share local insights and concerns relating to the aspects of the proposed scheme that SCC Cllr Clack has advised are outside the scope of this consultation.

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

- (226) Council noted SCC Cllr Clack had advised that SCC Highways officers have not responded to Council's request, channelled via SCC Cllr Clack, that had sought to establish the:
- (i) extent to which the assurances relating to limiting the granting of requests to divert M25 traffic along the A25 Reigate Road are no longer being met;
 - (ii) process and timing of the decisions made that have resulted in this apparent change; and
 - (iii) what actions can be taken to protect the amenity of residents living along the diversion route.
- (227) Council noted SCC Cllr Clack had suggested to Council they accept SCC Highways officers are unlikely to reply to Council's request and to wait to see whether the impact of the road closures is as bad in practice as Council fears before taking any further action.

Highways – Maintenance

- (228) Council noted:
- (i) the removal of ash trees from land alongside the westbound carriageway of the A25 Reigate Road between Tranquil Dale and Old Road was scheduled to be completed this week; and

- (ii) the SCC Tree Officer had marked up the trees for the contractors and provided assurance the contractors had been instructed to minimise collateral damage to the remaining trees and to remove arisings from site.

Winter Maintenance

(229) Council **resolved** to approve a proposal to:

- (i) authorise budgeted winter maintenance to edge footways alongside the westbound carriageway of the A25 between the parish boundary by Tranquil Dale and Old Road, and the section of footway opposite Buckland Nurseries; and
- (ii) encourage all users to report problems they encounter on the footways to the east of the village centre to SCC Highways given the parish council is unable to employ contractors to work on sections of previously cleared footway that do not have an intact top surface.

8. Amenities and Volunteer Activities

(230) Council noted an update from the Clerk on verbal quotes sought for the 2026/27 grass cutting season and **resolved** to authorise the Clerk to liaise with Josh Flynn to:

- (i) arrange for grass cutting to recommence as soon as the ground conditions permit and the rate of growth warrants; and
- (ii) confirm an extension of the current arrangement for a further twelve month period. **Action:** Clerk.

(231) Council **resolved** to authorise the Clerk to proceed with securing a contractor to undertake restorative pruning of the willow tree with a view to scheduling the work to shortly follow bud burst. **Action:** Clerk.

(232) Council noted that while making repairs to the fencing around the bus shelter the need for maintenance to the bus shelter was identified. Council **resolved** to:

- (i) record votes of thanks to Martin Boyce and to Dominic Sanders, Buckland Estate for providing resource to assist with making the repairs; and
- (ii) authorise the Clerk to arrange for maintenance to the bus shelter to be undertaken for an ex-Vat cost of no more than £150. **Action:** Clerk.

(233) Council considered the arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting, scheduled to be held at 7.30pm on Monday 23rd March 2026. Council **resolved** to accept an offer from Cllr Jones to arrange refreshments and Cllr Bourke to set out the room.

Actions: Cllr Husband to prepare an article for the February issue of the parish magazine (editorial deadline Monday 19th January) to encourage residents to attend. All Cllrs to share relevant information and updates with Cllr Husband.

(234) Council **resolved** to hold a village tidy event on Saturday 11th April, to commence at 10am to include a litter pick and tasks around the village. **Action:** Cllr Husband to prepare a poster to promote the village tidy event to publish via the village website, noticeboards and the March issue of the parish magazine.

9. Community Governance Review, Local Government Reorganisation, Neighbourhood Area Committee Pilot, Communications and Hybrid Meetings

Community Governance Review

(235) Council noted:

- (i) MVDC had recently called an extraordinary meeting on Tuesday 13th January 2026, to provide MVDC an opportunity to decide to accelerate the timeline for the Community Governance Review with the aim of completing it prior to the statutory instrument re: creation of the Unitary Authority taking effect;
- (ii) MVDC had published draft recommendations which do not propose any change for Buckland;
- (iii) MVDC's next step will be to consult all impacted households and notify all unaffected households prior to finalising recommendations by mid-March.

Local Government Reorganisation

- (236) Cllr Husband and the Clerk had attended the Surrey Branch of the National Association of Local Councils AGM and Autumn Briefing on Thursday 13th November 2025 in Cobham and considered the event, which had focused on the implications of the forthcoming local government reorganisation had been worthwhile.

Dorking and Villages Neighbourhood Area Committee (DVNAC) Pilot

- (237) Council noted Cllr Jones had:

- (i) attended the two DVNAC meetings, held on 11th November and 8th December;
- (ii) provided feedback to SCC following the second meeting to express concern that the summary feedback shared minutes prior to the close of the second and final meeting had not been fully considered or discussed by the attendees; rather it appeared to have been prepared by SCC officers on the expectation the DVNAC would “rubber stamp” it prior to it being submitted to UK Government Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Government;
- (iii) not received any response to the concerns expressed nor heard anything more from the SCC team that had led the pilot.

- (238) Council **resolved** to record its disappointment that the volunteers who had participated, in good faith, in the DVNAC pilot meetings had been let down by the SCC project team.

Hybrid meetings

- (239) Council considered a suggestion from SCC Cllr Clack for consideration to be given to applying, with her support, to SCC for capital funding to equip a meeting venue in Buckland to support hybrid meetings to enable Unitary Councillors to attend remotely.
- (240) Council noted this suggestion reflects a concern that it will be challenging, if not impractical to expect the two Unitary Councillors appointed to serve Dorking Rural division on matters previously divided between one SCC and three MVDC Councillors to regularly attend all parish council meetings.
- (241) Council noted that the equipment, if installed, would also, once Government introduces promised legislation, facilitate the remote attendance of parish councillors.
- (242) Council **resolved** to explore what equipment might be needed to facilitate remote attendance by Unitary Councillor. **Actions:** Cllr Husband to explore options for a monitor or a screen / projector. Clerk to explore technology options and clarify SCC criteria to qualify for a capital grant.

Communications

- (243) Council noted:

- (i) Natural England, having completed two statutory consultations had launched the Notice Period for its proposal to extend Surrey Hills National Landscape by 129 square kilometres;
- (ii) the notice period is a legal requirement for a landscape designation project and provides a final opportunity for the public and stakeholders to submit representations to Natural England on the draft proposal (known legally as a Draft Order);
- (iii) the Notice period will close on 14th January 2026, after which Natural England will, having considered any representations, proceed with preparing documentation for the making and submitting of an Order to the Secretary of State for confirmation.

- (244) Council noted Surrey Police had not provided a crime and incident report despite the request being submitted in good time.

- (245) Council noted consultants, working for the owners of Hartsfield Manor, had invited stakeholders to meet with the project team preparing redevelopment proposals in advance of holding a meeting for local residents.
- (246) Council noted an exchange of communications had been undertaken with SGN (Scotia Gas Networks) to highlight the status of land in the vicinity of Buckland Corner and alert the operation team to the requirement to apply for permission to work and to agree method statements with the relevant authorities.
- (247) Council noted updates issued by Surrey ALC, Surrey Hills, Gatwick Airport and GACC had been circulated to Cllrs and key information published on the parish news page of the village websites and within parish updates.

10. Forthcoming Meetings

- (248) The Parish Council will next meet on Monday 9th March 2026 and meetings are subsequently scheduled to be held in the Reading Room on the following dates:
 - 2026: 11th May, 13th July, 14th September and 9th November; and
 - 2027: 11th January, 8th March, 17th May, 12th July, 13th September, and 8th November.
- (249) Cllrs Jones, Pryor and Steed and the Clerk to attend a meeting at Hartsfield Manor on Friday 16th January 2026.
- (250) 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 10pm.

Sheena Boyce, Clerk

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