

BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held at 8pm on Monday 11th January 2016 in the Reading Room, Old Rd, Buckland.

Present: Cllrs Day, Husband, Inwood, Pryor, Steed and Westwell, and the Clerk. County Cllr Helyn Clack and District Councillor Paul Potter attended for part of the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

(235) Cllr Horden.

2. Declarations of Interest

(236) None.

3. Requests for Dispensations

(237) None.

4. Minutes

(238) Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th November 2015, were agreed. Cllr Husband signed the minutes as a correct record.

5. Community Policing

(239) The Mole Valley Neighbourhood Police Team had advised two crimes reported to have occurred in the locality between 6th November 2015 and 11th January 2016; a burglary of an outbuilding, involving the theft of power tools, a theft of cigarettes from the Shell garage.

(240) Cllr Steed having recently (5th January 2016) attended a “Policing in Your Neighbourhood” briefing advised Council that Surrey Police, will, over the coming months, be implementing a programme of strategic change in order to deal with the shift in the pattern of crime that has recently emerged and to do so within constrained budgets.

Cllr Steed commended Surrey Police for an excellent presentation (copy provided to Cllrs) and for engaging with Parish Councils at this time. Council noted the changes will happen on 1st April, that Inspector Hamlin will lead the Mole Valley Neighbourhood Police Team.

Council welcomed the commitment from Surrey Police, after a “settling in period”, to review their processes with a view to improving communications with Parish Councils. **Action:** Clerk to issue invitation to Inspector Hamlin to attend the Annual Parish Meeting.

(241) Cllr Steed had attended a meeting of the Mole Valley Rural Crime Panel (18th November 2015) at which concern had been expressed when PC Mark Trezise had explained the role of Rural Support Officer would be discontinued from April 2016. The Panel had resolved to await further details of the Surrey Police Strategic Review, and, if appropriate, to issue a letter to the Chief Constable of Surrey Police to express the panel’s concern at having heard of this recently proposed change. The Chairman of the Rural Crime Panel was asked to circulate the letter (not yet received) to Panel members with an invitation to Panel Members to consider issuing a letter of support. **Action:** Clerk, upon its receipt, to circulate the letter to Cllrs.

6. Open Forum

(242) Cllr Husband welcomed CCllr Helyn Clack and District Cllr Paul Potter to the meeting. Council agreed to discuss two items on the agenda in the presence of CCllr Clack and, principally for clarity, to minute those discussions under the appropriate agenda items.

(243) Local resident Chris Weston had raised a concern regarding dog fouling along Dungates Lane and asked the Parish Council to consider installing dog waste bins. The Clerk advised she had suggested to Mr Weston that as Dungates Lane is a private road that he contact Buckland Estates, the landowner to discuss the matter and had queried whether the use of discrete signs, providing information about the location of the nearest public litter bins might be a more appropriate action.

Council, having considered Mr Weston’s request, and mindful that many local groups, rather than funding the maintenance and servicing of litter bins are increasingly opting to remove them and educate people not to litter our countryside resolved not to install new bins at this time. **Action:** Clerk to reply to Mr Weston.

Cllr Clack left the meeting.

7. Planning

New Planning Applications

- (244) MO/2015/1576/PLAH Erection of 2 No. two storey side extensions following the demolition of existing single storey extensions at Yaverland Cottage, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH3 7BG. No Comment.

Mole Valley District Council (“MVDC”) Planning Notifications

The following Local Planning Authority decisions were noted:

- (245) MO/2015/1390/PLAH Erection of a single storey extension at April Cottage, Old Road, Buckland, RH3 7DY. Approved with conditions.
- (246) MO/2015/1744/PLAH: Extension to replace current glazed wing, new open porch and replacement upvc windows at The Former Potting Shed, Beechwood, Dungates Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BD. Approved with conditions.
- (247) MO/2015/1786/TFC: Removal of one willow tree at Street Farm Cottage, Rectory Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BH. No objection.
- (248) MO/2015/1983/PD: Prior approval for the erection of a single storey extension at Little Buckland Corner, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH2 8QP. No consultation; no approval required as application made under Part A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) 2013.
- (249) MO/2015/2023/CAT Removal of two field maples and one hawthorn tree at Oaklands, Slough Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BJ. No objection.

Planning Consultations

- (250) MVDC, having considered input gathered during an initial consultation had opened a further consultation on a proposed **MVDC Draft Charging Schedule for Community Infrastructure Levy**. Council, having considered the draft schedule concluded it had no further comments. No action required.
- (251) It was noted that **Buckland Liaison Group (“BLG”)** had met on 8th January 2016. Cllr Husband and the Clerk had attended the meeting and minutes would shortly be published.

Cllr Clack expressed her disappointment that the application had yet to be determined and advised she had, earlier that day, spoken with the Chair of the Surrey County Council (“SCC”) Planning Committee to emphasise that the local community, as a whole, wishes to see this application determined as soon as possible to enable the village to “draw a line” under sand extraction.

Cllr Clack advised she had requested a meeting with Case Officer Stephen Jenkins and will provide her support pursuant to ensuring the application is determined as soon as practically possible and hopefully in February.

Tapwood Workshops

- (252) Buckland Estates had provided Council with details of a planning application that had recently been submitted to MVDC to clarify the use of the hard standing around Tapwood Workshops and to seek approval for the required usage. Council noted that the application had now been validated as:

MO/2015/2076/CU Retrospective change of use to allow sale of cars in areas marked 3HB, 3HC and 3HD on submitted plan; change of use to allow car sales in area 3HA, all with associated access routes indicated on same plan at Tapwood Workshops, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH2 9RG.

The Clerk confirmed that the documents published on the MVDC website matched those previously circulated to Councillors. Action: Clerk to advise MVDC that Council has “No objection” to this application.

- (253) It was noted that in the recent meeting of the Buckland Liaison Group that all parties had encouraged Buckland Estate to arrange for a further planning application to be submitted to MVDC to regularise the planning for each of the two mobile units sited on the hardstanding. Council concluded that whilst it would not ordinarily consider the installation of mobile units appropriate in the village that it had no objection to the retention of these two units given their intended use is to support existing businesses that provide local employment opportunities and their proposed location is not prominent. **Action:** Clerk, upon notification of a planning application, to circulate the details to councillors and, subject to not receiving a request to convene a meeting to consider the application to submit a “No objection” response to MVDC.
- (254) Cllrs Day, Pryor, Steed and Westwell had attended a **training session for Parish Councillors** during which Paul Feehily and Gary Rhoades Brown had set out the planning policy framework that governs decisions made by the Development Control team and outlined the role and responsibilities of Parish Councillors. It was noted that the Clerk had relayed Councillors’ appreciation for the time given by officers for what had been considered a useful session by those who attended.

8. Highways, Transport and Rights of Way

- (255) It was noted that the Clerk, having met with MVDC and Biffa (MVDC contractor) had been able to schedule the post autumn rural visit from the road sweeper to coincide with a quiet morning at the Reading Room and to ensure the full width of Old Road would be swept. It was noted that the ability of the sweeper to clear to the edge of the hard surface had been hampered outside The Forge by overhanging trees and shrubs extending into the highway and that visibility lines from the bus shelter continue to be obscured. **Action:** All to advise anyone who raises a concern with visibility from the shelter to report to Surrey Highways.

An earlier visit to sweep alongside the section of the A25 between the welcome gates had been scheduled shortly after the on-site meeting at which it was accepted the large build-up of leaf fall had created a safety hazard. Council noted that MVDC had only received two requests for street cleaning from local residents. **Actions:** All to emphasise to local residents the need for reports and requests to be submitted by individuals to both MVDC and SCC. Clerk to focus February Parish Magazine Update on “reporting”.

- (256) It was noted that trees in the copse opposite the Shell garage caused a power outage during the evening of Wednesday 16th December that left some properties without electricity until early the next morning. The works to repair the supply line required a complete closure of the A25 and considerable effort from UK Power Network (“UKPN”) engineers through the night. Cllr Pryor reported that UKPN had advised an intention to return to bundle this section of supply line that currently comprises four separate wires. Subsequent to the UKPN works, it was noted that the
- (i) verge alongside the copse is now in need of repair with an area of the copse remaining taped off;
 - (ii) conduit, believed to be owned by Virgin Media is exposed in the verge opposite the Shell garage and that the pavement alongside these areas is extremely muddy; and
 - (iii) a tree that fell earlier this year continues to partially obstruct the roadside footpath.

The Clerk confirmed that each of these issues had been reported to SCC on more than one occasion and that a request for the pavement to be cleaned had very recently been submitted to both SCC and MVDC.

Action: Clerk to await response to most recent requests, and, unless action is forthcoming, to forward a request to Cllr Clack for advice as to who should now be approached.

- (257) Cllr Clack confirmed that a small budget for Highways Localism tasks had been allocated but, before extending her support for a proposal to “reclaim sections of footpath alongside the A25” she expressed a wish to explore whether, there might be any funds available under different budgets such as “Community Wellbeing” for such a task. **Action:** Clerk to follow up with Cllr Clack ahead of March meeting.

- (258) Cllr Pryor had attended the **GACC AGM** and Council noted that the GACC message endorsed at the AGM was “no new runway, no new flight paths, dispersal of aircraft not concentration, fewer night flights and a greater say for local communities in the way aviation policy is decided. The meeting heard from Jeremy Quin, MP for Horsham that all seven of the MPs for constituencies around Gatwick are united in their support for GACC and their opposition to a second runway and received assurance that this group of MPs has committed to continue to lobby in the house. Brendon Sewell, GACC Chairman, reported that recent changes to flight paths have led to the formation of ten new protest groups with widespread calls for investment in new technology to counter the increased noise pollution being suffered by those living under and near to the flightpaths.
- (259) It was noted that the latest **GACC newsletter** had been circulated to Cllrs and included in a Parish Update.

9. Amenities and Events

- (260) It was noted that only a modest number of households had responded to a request issued for broadband speeds to be submitted to the Clerk. It was agreed to repeat the request ahead of the Annual Parish Meeting. **Action:** Clerk.
- (261) The Clerk advised that Burleys would be completing a grass cut as soon as conditions allow and that unless the temperature drops and remains low that at least one more cut, additional to the contract may be needed prior to the March meeting.
- (262) It was noted that Burleys had completed the work to redefine the footpath edges of the areas of maintained grass. **Actions:** Clerk to express appreciation to Burleys for a job well done and to arrange for a cheque for an amount of £290.40 including £48.40 Vat to be issued upon receipt of an appropriate invoice. Clerk to issue a request (via the village email group) for a volunteer to cut down the perennial plants from around the pond perimeter and to dispose of the cuttings.
- (263) It was noted that Simon Elson (SE), with input from the Clerk had commenced the **review of the 2011-2016 Management Plan for the Village Pond and Green** pursuant to being in a position to consult with the village at the Annual Parish Meeting on 25th April 2016. SE had confirmed he is available to attend the meeting.
- (264) The Clerk relayed advice from Duncan Green (DG) that having inspected the willow tree adjacent to the village pond that Council include provision in the budget to allow for the tree to be pruned towards the end of the 2016/17 financial year. DG had also confirmed that in the event SCC Highways does not remove the sycamore tree growing in the highways verge between the bus shelter and Notice Board at the top of Old Road that the quote of (£290 + Vat) that he provided a year to reduce the tree to a stump shall remain valid until 31st March 2016. **Action:** Clerk to contact Surrey Highways to establish the likelihood of the tree work being completed and to update Cllrs.
- (265) Following a decision to publish parish magazines in their entirety on the church website, Council approved the Clerk’s request for Council to subscribe for a landline number for inclusion in future issues of the magazine. The Clerk confirmed the budget projections include provision for this amenity. **Action:** Clerk.
- (266) MVDC had forwarded details of two initiatives recently launched to mark the Queen’s 90th birthday in 2016:
- (i) Firstly, over the first weekend of March; “Clean for the Queen” [www.cleanforthequeen.co.uk] aiming to encourage local communities to hold litter picks; and
 - (ii) Secondly, on 12th June; “The Patrons Lunch” [www.thepatronsmeal.com].
- Council asked the Clerk to circulate the details in a Parish Update to highlight the initiatives to potential volunteers. **Action:** Clerk.

10. Community Wellbeing

- (267) Cllr Inwood had represented Council at an event held jointly by SCC and our local District Councils to provide an opportunity for local groups to come together, make connections and share ideas on how to look after local residents in Mole Valley, Banstead, Epsom & Ewell, and East Elmbridge (“Surrey Downs”). Cllr Inwood reported that four work streams had been identified pursuant to improving the way services are provided across Surrey Downs and advised she had volunteered to contribute to the group that will look at how information is shared between groups in Surrey Downs to aid signposting for local residents.

11. Formalities

- (268) The Surrey Association Local Councils (“SALC”) **November Newsletter** had been circulated to Cllrs, as had the agenda for a **SALC Update**, to be held in Guildford on 11th February 2016. It was noted that Council would not be sending a representative to attend the SALC Update.
- (269) An invitation from Surrey Countryside and Rural Enterprise Forum (**SCREF**) to submit views about the future of rural Surrey had been included in a Parish Update and details of the 2016 SCREF conference circulated to Councillors. It was noted that Council would not be sending a representative to attend the SCREF conference.
- (270) Council had received an update from **3SC**, the joint initiative (formed by Surrey CC, East Sussex CC and West Sussex CC), setting out objectives and a timescale for the bid they are preparing to submit to central government to seek greater devolved powers and resources. SALC, in association with 3SC, the 23 District and Borough Councils and the South Downs National Park will be holding a briefing and networking event at The Hawth Theatre in Crawley, between 10am and 4pm on Friday 11th March 2016. It was noted that unless Cllr Horden were to express an interest that Council is unable, due to the prior commitments of councillors to field a representative.
- (271) Councillors had been provided with a copy of **Buckland Parochial Charity**’s latest published accounts for the year to 30th September 2015, as lodged with the Charity Commission. It was noted that the year-end date for future accounting periods will be 31st December to align the Parochial Charity accounts with the calendar year basis upon which grants are awarded by the Henry Smith Charity.
- (272) It was noted that The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires that from 2017, Council will, as a smaller authority be required **to appoint an external auditor through a ‘Sector Led Body’** or to opt out of such arrangements and make a local appointment.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) are working together to establish a ‘sector led body’ to procure audit for smaller authorities for the start of the 2017/18 financial year and this process is being supported and funded by central government (DCLG).

All smaller authorities will be automatically opted in to the new body and have an external auditor procured for them unless they specifically opt out. Any authority that opts out must ensure their own arrangements include the establishment of an Auditor Panel, follow the statutory appointment process set out in regulations and those arrangements must lead to the appointment of an auditor by 31st December 2016.

Councillors expressed concern that Council is being asked to commit to a new arrangement without the benefit of any indication as to what the costs of that arrangement will be. The Clerk relayed advice issued by the Surrey branch of NALC that whilst the cost of the new arrangement is, as yet unknown, that the cost of opting out will undoubtedly be higher than the cost of remaining opted in. Council, having considered the information set out in the previously circulated briefing note (issued jointly by NALC and SLCC) resolved to remain opted in to the as yet to be established sector led body.

District Cllr Paul Potter left the meeting.

12. Finance

- (235) Cllr Clack outlined the implications for SCC and its residents of the recently announced Government Financial Settlement and encouraged Council to make a considered assessment of the potential need for the Parish Council to undertake additional tasks around the village as the pressure on District and County Councils increases. In particular, Cllr Clack advised Council to view any discretionary funding it currently receives from either SCC or MVDC to be at risk and to anticipate the withdrawal and/or introduction of charges for discretionary services.
- (236) Cllr Clack, responding to a request from the Clerk, confirmed that whilst she had recently agreed to donate a further £1000 to BERT that she would support a request from Buckland Parish Council for any residual balance remaining to part fund proposed work to a section of granite setts adjacent to the village green. **Action:** Clerk to follow up with Cllr Clack to ensure a bid can be submitted prior to the year end.

Budget and Precept Request for the period April 2016 – March 2017

- (273) 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 2016 had been circulated to Cllrs accompanied by a “wish list” of potential expenditure proposals relating to amenity improvements.
- (274) It was noted that the Finance team at MVDC had recently
- (i) advised Council that a proposal to apply a small increase to the 2015/16 council tax support grant of £750 is being prepared for consideration by MVDC and agreed it would be reasonable, for the purposes of preparing the draft budget to assume an increase of 1.9% will be applied. It was noted that this grant is provided to offset what would otherwise be a reduction in precept as a consequence of the localisation of council tax benefits that first took effect on 1 April 2013;
 - (ii) affirmed that under a three-year agreement reached in December 2013 that the concurrent grants for 2016/17 will equal the 2015/16 amount of £1911, uplifted by the same percentage as MVDC applies to the Council tax. For the purpose of the draft budget an increase of 1.9% has been applied, taking the 2016/17 concurrent grant to £1947; and
 - (iii) notified a local tax base for Buckland Parish of £295.90 for 2016/17 compared to £295.70 for 2015/16.
- (275) Draft financials had highlighted a year on year increase in committed costs of £800.
- (276) It was noted that
- (i) as the parish council tax notified to residents for 2015/16 had been £7982 whereas the request submitted had been £8732, that an additional one-off grant of £750 had been provided by MVDC;
 - (ii) had the requested precept been collected, the year on year increases in Band D Council Tax for each of the last two years would have been 1.9%; and
 - (iii) whilst a 2016/17 precept of £8907, would represent a 1.9% increase to the Band D charge requested for 2015/16, it would amount to £2.51 per month and appear as an 11.5% increase on council tax bills received by residents.
- (277) Council, having reviewed the current year forecast and draft budget concluded that with budgetary pressures at District and County set to increase there is a need for the Parish Council to ensure it has sufficient financial resource available to be able to fulfil its obligation to maintain the village green and pond, and, when determining how best to set the budget to manage the significant risk that discretionary grants could be withdrawn in the near future.

- (278) Council resolved to
- (i) set budgeted expenditure for the 2016/17 financial year at £14,390;
 - (ii) to establish a £3000 election reserve, sufficient to cover the MVDC estimated costs of a Parish Council election in May 2019 and to budget to transfer £750 to the election reserve in 2016/17;
 - (iii) increase the Band D parish council tax charge by 42.2% to £3.50 per month, noting that this will, as a consequence of the sequence of events set out in Minute 276, appear as an increase of 55.6% on 2016/17 Council Tax bills;
 - (iv) submit a precept request for the 2016/17 financial year of £12,428. The precept request form was duly signed by Cllrs Husband and Day. **Action:** Clerk to return the precept request to MVDC.
- (279) Council adopted the remaining assumptions and explanatory notes that had accompanied the financial projections. **Action:** Clerk to circulate schedules, updated to reflect decisions taken and to pursue the expenditure proposals.

Account Payments and Receipts

- (280) The following payments were approved:
- (i) Burley and Sons Limited £86.32 including £14.39 Vat, One cut of the grass during November 2015.
 - (ii) Information Commissioner £35.00, Renewal of Data Protection Act Registration;
 - (iii) Sheena Boyce £129.60, Salary £59.40, mileage £9.10, and £61.10 council expenses.
- (281) It was noted that the Vat Reclaim of £2,334.18, for the period 1 April 2015 – 31 October 2015 had been received into Council's bank account on 19th November 2015.
- (282) Approval was given for Cllr Inwood to attend a SALC New Councillor Training on the evening of 10th March 2016 at a cost of £66.00 including £11.00 Vat. **Action:** Clerk authorised to arrange for a cheque to be issued upon receipt of an invoice.
- (283) Approval was given for the Clerk to attend a SALC Clerks Update on 8th March 2016 at a cost of £78.00 including £13.00 Vat. **Action:** Clerk authorised to arrange for a cheque to be issued upon receipt of an invoice.
- (284) Cllr Day verified the bank balances entered on the bank reconciliation against the bank statements and confirmed that no exceptions had been identified in the transactions reported since the last meeting.

13. Forthcoming Meetings

- (285) The **Parish Council** confirmed that next full Council Meeting will be held on Monday 14th March 2016 and that subsequent meetings are scheduled to be held on 9th May, 11th July, 12th September and 14th November 2016.
- (286) The 2016 **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held on Monday 25th April 2016. The Clerk confirmed a booking had been made for the Reading Room.
- (287) The Clerk will attend a meeting of the **SESW Customer Scrutiny Panel** in Redhill on Monday 25th January 2016.
- (288) The Clerk will attend a meeting of **Mole Valley Clerks** at Pippbrook on Wednesday 27th January 2016.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.45pm.

Sheena Boyce, Clerk

email: bucklandpc@sheenaboyce.co.uk

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