

## BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held at 8pm on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in the Reading Room, Old Rd, Buckland.

**Present:** Cllrs Cox, Horden, Husband, Pryor and Steed, and the Clerk. Local resident Ray Stiles attended the meeting and County Cllr Helyn Clack attended for items 1-6.

### 1. Election of Chairman

- (1) Cllr Husband was proposed as Chairman by Cllr Steed and seconded by Cllr Cox. The proposal was agreed and Cllr Husband signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Chairman.
- (2) Cllr Husband extended a warm welcome to local resident Ray Stiles, Cllr Cox to her first meeting as a Parish Councillor and County Cllr Helyn Clack. Cllr Husband congratulated C.Cllr Clack on her recent re-election to represent Dorking Rural Division.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

- (3) Cllrs Day and Jones and District Cllr Paul Potter.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

- (4) None.

### 4. Requests for Dispensations

- (5) None.

### 5. Minutes

- (6) Minutes of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017, were agreed. Cllr Husband signed the minutes as a correct record.

### 6. Open Forum

- (7) The Mole Valley Neighbourhood Police Team had advised that since the March meeting reported crimes in Buckland had included four thefts including a vehicle from a farm and a lawnmower, three incidents of make off without payment, damage reported to a window and a farm gate, an incident involving an aggressive dog and a domestic incident. An item had been posted on the village website to highlight the opportunity for residents to register to receive targeted information via the Surrey Police In the Know system.
- (8) C.Cllr Helyn Clack congratulated Nigel Husband on his reappointment as Chairman and invited Council to raise any issues they would like her to follow up on behalf of the parish with officers at Surrey County Council ("SCC").
- (9) Cllr Steed took the opportunity, as Council's representative on matters relating to Transport, to raise two SCC related issues:
  - (i) the **unacceptable condition of the road surface of the A25** through Buckland, except for the short stretch at the junction of Lawrence Lane. Cllr Steed expressed thanks to C.Cllr Clack for the part she played in the delivery of this recently completed safety scheme and asked how much longer the local community will have to wait for improvements to the rest of the road, particularly near the junction with Tranquil Dale and the Shell garage and across the junctions of Old Road and Tapwood Lane.

C.Cllr Clack assured Council that SCC officers are aware of the deterioration in the road surface of the A25 (as is she) and recognise this section of highway needs maintenance. C.Cllr Clack cited heavy traffic as a primary cause of the degree of deterioration in Surrey's roads and advised Council that SCC continues to lobby for a change in the funding formula that is based purely on the length of road under management without any account of the weight of traffic using the roads.

C.Cllr Clack cautioned that as SCC must tightly control spending this year unbudgeted work is unlikely to be approved. **Action:** C.Cllr Clack to continue to press for maintenance to be completed along the A25 through Buckland at the earliest opportunity.

- (ii) **proposal to install a variable message sign**, for the benefit of westbound drivers on the A25, in a location yet to be determined, between Reigate Heath and Betchworth roundabout. Cllr Steed set out Council's current position as follows: until an operational purpose for such a sign has been clearly established and explained, via Council, to the local community, no proposal to install such a sign should be implemented. It was noted that C.Cllr Clack had been copied on correspondence between SCC officers and Council and supports Council's stated position. **Actions:** C.Cllr Clack to follow up with Matthew Jezzard, the SCC officer tasked with implementing the proposal to install variable message signs, to ensure appropriate consultation, supported by a reasoned explanation of the operational purpose for any proposed sign is undertaken with Council. Cllr Steed to maintain periodic contact with Matthew Jezzard.
- (10) Ray Stiles, responding to an invitation from Cllr Husband to raise any issues or concerns he might have during the Open Forum expressed his concern about speeding traffic through the village and questioned the effectiveness of the Vehicle Activated Sign sited near the Shell garage. Cllr Husband assured Mr Stiles that Council valued his feedback and would share it with our local police team and thanked him for making time to attend.

*C.Cllr Clack left the meeting to attend a further three Parish Council Annual Meetings.*

## **7. Planning**

### **New Planning Application**

- (11) MO/2016/1479: Retrospective application for change of use of outside area to storage (B8) for recycling materials awaiting collection; wood pallets awaiting collection or in process of being shredded. Install 4 No. storage containers in yard to store inbound goods at peak times at Unit B, Buffer Depot, Station Road, Betchworth, RH3 7BZ.

It was noted that this retrospective application seeks to remove a planning condition imposed at the time permission was granted to facilitate a sublet of part of the warehouse and that its purpose was to protect the greenbelt location from inappropriate development. Council ratified the letter of objection submitted to MVDC, the drafting of which was consistent with Council's representations in advance of the condition being imposed and repeated complaints seeking enforcement of that condition. No further action required.

### **Mole Valley District Council ("MVDC") Planning Notifications**

The following Local Planning Authority decisions were noted:

- (12) MO/2017/0068: Erection of new show/office building following removal of existing show/office building at Buckland Pool, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH2 9RE. Approved with conditions.
- (13) MO/2017/0168: Erection of a single-storey wrap around extension, front porch and re-modelling of driveway at Domus, Old Road, Buckland, RH3 7DU. Refused.
- (14) MO/2017/0177: Erect two storey rear extension and first floor side extension over part of existing garage at Cloonagh, Old Road, Buckland, RH3 7DU. Approved with conditions.
- (15) MO/2017/0178 (and 0179 Listed Building Consent): Erection of single storey side orangery extension following removal of existing bay window at Street Farm House, Rectory Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BH. Approved with conditions.

- (16) MO/2017/0515: Install new pole, in highway verge adjacent to pole 145233, and relocate service connection to Thakeham Cottage onto new pole at land adjacent to Hill View, Larchfield and Thakeham Cottage, Old Road, Buckland, RH3 7DU. No objection.
- (17) It was noted that the Clerk and Tim Westwell had recently met with Richard Worsley and Antony Eisinger. Richard Worsley, the recently appointed Chair of the Betchworth and Buckland Society is reviewing the aims and objectives of the Society and the meeting had been arranged, at Richard's request, to provide an opportunity to consider matters relating to planning policy and development control.

## **8.Highways, Transport and Rights of Way**

### **A25 through Buckland**

- (18) It was noted that D.Cllrs Paul Potter and John Muggeridge had advised they continue to press Surrey Highways for action to be taken to repair the road surface of the A25 through the village and to press MVDC Environmental Health to agree to undertake a noise survey in the vicinity of Tranquil Dale. **Action:** Clerk to include a request for all users to report poor sections of road surface as highway enquiries to Surrey County Council ("SCC").
- (19) Council, having reviewed the draft **Policy on Signs and Road Markings**, and noted that the drafting is wholly consistent with the Decluttering Initiative completed in 2013, resolved to adopt the policy. **Action:** Clerk to circulate an adopted version and diarise an initial review in March 2019.
- (20) The Clerk reported that SCC Highways had announced that funding provisionally allocated to support **Highways Localism** during 2017/18 is likely to be cut. Consequently it is not known whether a proposal (to undertake a further four days improvement works to the pavements alongside the A25 to the east of the village centre), submitted last December, will be successful.
- (21) It was noted that vegetation and plants obstructing the hard surfaced-footpath alongside Garden End and between Yewdells Close and Robins Close had been cut back. A vote of thanks to Mr James Bennett, the owner of Garden End was recorded.
- (22) SCC Countryside Access had issued a briefing note setting out the significant challenges the team faces following a cut in their funding from £290,000 in 2016/17 to £100,000 in 2017/18. Council, having reflected on the points set out in the briefing note, accepted an offer from Cllr Pryor to review the extent of information readily available relating to rights of way in Buckland and to consider how Council might wish to respond to the changes taking effect within SCC. **Actions:** Cllr Pryor to liaise with Jim Docking, the Clerk and SCC Countryside Access to initiate the review.

### **Aviation**

- (23) Council noted that a new page, "Flightpaths affecting Buckland" has been published on the village website, and that a recent parish update had highlighted an opportunity for parishioners to consider whether to respond to an "airport runway consultation" (as recently requested by GACC). It was noted that the update had been issued via email and submitted for inclusion in the May Parish Magazine.
- (24) Council approved draft responses to the Airspace Consultation and Airport Runway Consultation. **Action:** Clerk to submit Council responses and upload a copy to the aviation page of the village website.

## 9. Amenities and Events

- (25) Council noted that during the spring growing season the village green is being cut regularly, that the cuttings are not being collected, and that the frequency of cut will, as last year, be reduced as the rate of growth slows
- (26) Local resident Tilly Mitchell had advised the Brockham Horticultural Society (“BHS”) had recently been bequeathed a sum of money by Celia and James Fortune and that the BHS Committee had since decided to use the funds to purchase spring bulbs for planting in the village centres of Buckland, Brockham and Betchworth. Tilly Mitchell had been nominated to lead the Buckland autumn planting and had approached the Parish Council for support. Council expressed its support for the initiative. **Action:** Clerk to extend support to Tilly Mitchell to recruit volunteers for the bulb planting.
- (27) Council approved the Clerk’s proposal to purchase a modest stock (£50 maximum spend) of child sized hi-visibility vests to be lent to children who are being supervised by their parents at village tidy events.
- (28) It was agreed the 2017 **Annual Parish Meeting** had been both well attended and well received and 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018 was selected as the date for the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting. It was noted that Jim Docking had submitted a report on the condition of **local rights of way** to the Annual Parish Meeting.

## 10. Formalities

- (29) It was noted that during the 2016/17 financial year Council had felt able to deal with all matters relating to finance within ordinary council meetings. It was agreed to continue this basis during the 2017/18 financial year.
- (30) **Planning Committee:** It was agreed that the use of the Planning Committee shall continue for a further year and that the following terms of reference should continue to apply:
- (i) The role of the Planning Committee is to review planning applications, notice of appeals, enforcement notices and other planning papers of relevance to the Parish and to provide appropriate input and support to the Clerk, pursuant to the preparation of responses, representations or statements.
  - (ii) If a response needs to be issued prior to the next meeting of the Parish Council, the Clerk has delegated power to submit such a response to the relevant authority, having first consulted with those Cllrs serving on the Planning Committee
  - (iii) The Planning Committee should arrange for a Cllr or the Clerk to attend appeal hearings to present the Parish Council’s case if that is considered desirable.

It was agreed to appoint Cllrs Husband, Pryor, Cox and Horden to the Planning Committee for the 2017/18 year.

### (31) Representatives

- (i) Cllr Husband to represent Council for matters relating to the Village Green and, as Chairman, to continue to represent Council on the Buckland Graveyard Trust.
- (ii) Cllr Horden to represent Council for matters relating to the Village Pond.
- (iii) Cllr Pryor to represent Council on matters relating to Countryside Access (Rights of Way) to include continued attendance at meetings of the Surrey Hills Byways Working Group and to continue to undertake the weekly Insurance check.
- (iv) Cllr Steed to represent the Parish Council on matters relating to Surrey Police and, with support of Cllr Pryor, on matters relating to Transport.
- (v) Cllr Jones and Cox to jointly champion matters relating to Community Wellbeing.

- (vi) Martin Boyce to continue as village webmaster, Jim Docking to continue to coordinate the rights of way condition reports and Paul Rietchel to continue as Flag Officer.
- (vii) Cllr Jones to represent Council at the SSALC AGM to be held in the autumn.

The Chairman's proposal that these positions be accepted on block was agreed.

- (32) It was noted that Council had previously appointed Ianthe Cox, Debbie Jones, Philip Haynes and Ann Adams to the position of nominative trustees to **Buckland Parochial Charity** to serve until May 2019.
- (33) It was noted that consultation periods, such as (but not limited to) those applicable to policy reviews and operational practices can often open and close between two consecutive Parish Council meetings. It was agreed to **delegate authority to the Clerk** to respond to any such consultations subject to a requirement for her to consult with Cllrs.

### **Public Contracts Regulations 2015 statutory guidance**

- (34) The Clerk reminded Council of the need to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 statutory guidance that requires all local authorities, including Parish Councils, to publish performance data on their website pages to show the proportion of valid and undisputed invoices paid within 30 days and to disclose the amount of interest due (whether paid or not) on invoices settled late.
- (35) The Clerk advised Council that 100% of valid and undisputed invoices had been paid within 30 days during the 2016/17 financial year and that no interest had been charged or paid on invoices.
- (36) It was agreed to delegate authority to the Clerk, for the 2017/18 financial year, to arrange for cheques to be issued to settle any valid and undisputed invoices that need to be paid before the next meeting of the Parish Council to enable this guidance to be duly observed. **Action:** Clerk to ensure the detail of any such payments are reported to Council at the next meeting.
- (37) A set of draft **Standing Orders** had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting together with a copy of the latest available version of Model Standing Orders issued by NALC (National Association of Local Councils). Council, having considered the proposed Standing Orders, resolved to adopt the same without amendment. **Actions:** Clerk to upload newly adopted Standing Orders to the website, update the Risk Register and diarise an initial review at the September 2018 meeting. Clerk to update a cross reference from the Financial Regulations to the Standing Orders and to circulate and publish an updated version of the same.
- (38) Councillors had, prior to the meeting, been provided with a draft "**Policy on the management of unreasonable complainant behaviour**" and a draft "**Bullying and Harassment Policy - Statement of Commitment**". Council, having given due consideration to the drafting of these documents resolved to adopt them. **Action:** Clerk to update the village website and diarise to include an initial review in September 2018.
- (39) The Clerk had updated Council's **Freedom of Information Publication Scheme Schedule** to reflect the adoption, over recent months, of additional policies, procedures and statements. Council resolved to adopt the new schedule. **Action:** Clerk to upload new schedule to parish council section of the village website.
- (40) Cllrs Cox and Jones had expressed an interest in attending a **Councillor Briefing and Awareness Update** on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017 at a cost of £66.00 each including £11.00 Vat. **Action:** Clerk authorised to book two places and arrange for a cheque to be issued upon receipt of an invoice.

## **Mole Valley Local Forum of Parish Councils**

- (41) Cllrs Horden and Steed had attended the recent meeting, held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March in Betchworth at which the key guest speaker had been David Munro, Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.
- (42) Cllrs Steed and Horden had advised that most Parishes had expressed a need for more effective communication. Cllr Steed had since had an email exchange with David Munro. As a result of this engagement David Munro had advised Cllr Steed that work is “advanced on developing a protocol for future engagement with parish councils” to which Cllr Steed had replied to express Council’s interest in hearing more as this work evolves.
- (43) The forum received a marketing presentation from 2020 Consultancy, a firm keen to assist local councils to secure funding for capital projects as and when a need arises together with an update from GACC relating to aviation consultations currently open for comment.
- (44) It was noted that items raised at the Forum had included confirmation that the traffic calming scheme promised to the Pebble Hill residents will be implemented, concern about recent power cuts in Headley, falling numbers at schools in Ockley and Capel prompting a site review and an update from CCllr Clack relating to Angus Energy (Brockham).
- (45) It was noted that Brockham had offered to host the next meeting, to be held at the start of Q4 2017.
- (46) Cllr Cox had attended the recent **Betchworth Annual Parish Meeting** and provided feedback to Council. Cllr Cox had enjoyed an excellent presentation given by Bob Bartlett, a Brockham resident who has been involved in the setting up of two of Brockham’s voluntary groups BERT and BEV.
- (47) It was noted that **updates** issued by **SALC, Came and Company** (Council’s insurance broker) the **Surrey Hills Board** and the **Surrey Hills Society**, had been circulated to Cllrs and key information included within Parish Updates.

## **11. Finance**

### **Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2017**

- (48) A pack of financial information, including the Annual Return and supporting schedules to be submitted to the external auditor, fixed asset register, full year financial analysis (compared to budget and prior year), risk assessments and minutes had been submitted to Braidwood Wheeler & Co, Council’s Internal Auditor. It was noted that the internal audit had been completed during April 2017, that no issues had been raised and that the feedback issued by Chris Braidwood had been circulated to Cllrs.
- (49) Council had completed an Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Controls; a process that had included a review of the Financial Regulations and consideration of the latest updated Risk Assessment at the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016, had concluded that its system of internal control remained effective and resolved that the risk assessment remained relevant and effective.
- (50) It was noted that Council, having adopted several policies and procedures at the January 2017 meeting, had adopted updated Financial Regulations and undertaken a further Risk Assessment at the March 2017 meeting. Council had resolved to agree that the risk assessment schedule remains relevant and effective.
- (51) Cllrs resolved to adopt the 2016/17 Annual Governance Statement. Accordingly, page 2 of the Annual Return was signed by Cllr Husband, Chairman, and Sheena Boyce, Clerk.

- (52) It was noted that the Responsible Financial Officer had signed the 2016/17 Accounting Statements to certify that the accounting statements in the Annual Return present fairly the financial position of Council and properly present its receipts and payments.
- (53) It was noted that Cllr Day had verified the bank balances entered on the bank reconciliation prepared to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 against the bank statements, initialled both documents, and confirmed that no exceptions had been identified in the transactions reported since the March meeting.
- (54) All present agreed to approve the Accounting Statements for the year ending 31st March 2017. Accordingly, the Accounting Statements, set out on page 3 of the Annual Return were signed by Cllr Husband, Chairman.
- (55) Council noted that the Annual Return and Supporting Information (comprising an end of year bank reconciliation and explanation of significant differences versus the prior year) needs to be submitted to the **external auditors** by 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 and that the period for the exercise of public rights will commence on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and end on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2017.
- (56) It was noted that the **Transparency Regulations** require a copy of the information submitted to the external auditors, together with a schedule of “2016/17 Payments with a value of at least £100 ex-Vat” and a summary of Councillor responsibilities for 2017/18 to be published on the village website no later 4<sup>th</sup> June 2017, one day prior to commencement of the period for the exercise of public rights for the 2016/17 Accounts.
- (57) **Insurance:** It was noted that 2017/18 will be the third year of the 3-year term agreement entered into in 2015 with Aviva. The increase in premium reflects a 1% indexation in the value of street furniture and the 3.5% increase in Insurance Premium Tax. The Clerk had updated insurance values for each of the assets listed on the Asset Register (copy circulated). Council adopted the updated Asset Register. **Action:** Clerk to update the risk register to reflect the renewal and to circulate it to Cllrs.
- (58) It was noted that a recent bulletin had suggested Smaller Councils might be able to submit a grant application, prepared on the same basis as for 2016/17, to fund the cost of employing resource to help Council comply with the **Transparency Regulations**. Council approved a grant application drafted to reflect the cost of employing the clerk for 2 hours per month (2017/18), at current rates of pay. **Action:** Clerk to submit the application if a fund opens.
- (59) The Clerk’s recommendation to renew Council’s subscription to Dropbox Pro, a service that maintains an **offsite backup of Council’s electronic filing** was considered. The £79.00 fee for renewal of the provision of up to 1 TB cloud storage for a further 12-month period was approved. **Action:** Clerk.
- (60) It was agreed to add Cllrs Cox and Jones to the **HSBC Bank plc mandate** and for the terms of the mandate to continue otherwise unchanged. **Actions:** Clerk to submit mandate changes to HSBC. Cllrs Cox and Jones to visit HSBC to complete identity checks as soon as practicable.

### **Account Payments and Receipts**

- (61) It was noted that payments, for £216 (including £36 Vat) to Design Lynx Limited and £172.43 to SALC Limited, had been issued in accordance with minute 2016:322.
- (62) The following payments were approved:
- (i) Burley and Sons Limited £88.68 including £14.78 Vat,  
First Cut – during March 2017
  - (ii) Came & Company £295.89,  
Insurance Policy Fee 1 June 2017 – 31 May 2018

- (iii) Burley and Sons Limited £273.37 including £45.56 Vat,  
Three cuts – April 2017
  - (iv) Dropbox Pro £79.00 including £13.17 Vat  
Secure virtual file storage 22 May 2017 – 21 May 2018
  - (v) Sheena Boyce £2.40  
re-imburement re Annual Parish Meeting.
- (63) It was noted that an invoice for £120 including £20 Vat, would soon be received for the recently completed internal audit. **Action:** Clerk to arrange for a cheque to be issued upon receipt of an appropriate invoice for the work undertaken by Chris Braidwood.
- (64) It was noted that following amounts had been received into the Parish Council bank account since the March meeting:
- (i) £819.36 refund of VAT paid between 1 October 2017 and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017;
  - (ii) £7,755 first instalment of 2017/18 precept, concurrent grant and council tax support grant;
  - (iii) £112.70 donation raised through the sale of walk booklets.
- (65) It was noted that Cllr Steed had verified the bank balances entered on the bank reconciliation against the bank statements, initialled both documents, and had confirmed that no exceptions had been identified in the transactions reported since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

## **12. Complaint from a member of the public**

*Council resolved to exclude the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media from the meeting prior to consideration of the complaint from a member of the public as Council considered publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of its confidential nature.*

- (66) Council reviewed a complaint from a member of the public and the response previously issued and agreed a further response.

## **13. Forthcoming Meetings**

- (67) The **Parish Council** confirmed that next full Council Meeting will be held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and that subsequent meetings are scheduled to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> September and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and on 8<sup>th</sup> January and 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018.
- (68) Cllr Pryor will attend (or arrange for an alternate) to attend a meeting of the **Surrey Hills Off Road Working Group** on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017.
- (69) A **Pond Clearance Event**, to be led by the Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers, is planned for Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2017.
- (70) The **2018 Annual Parish Meeting** will be held on Monday 26<sup>TH</sup> March 2018.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.05pm.

**Sheena Boyce, Clerk**

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