

## BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Meeting held at 8pm on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015 in the Cellar function room at the Red Lion, Old Road.

**Present:** Cllrs Day, Horden, Husband, Pryor, Steed and Westwell, District Councillors Paul Potter and John Muggeridge and the Clerk. PC Dom Loraine attended for item 5 and part of item 6.

### 1. Apologies for Absence

(259) County Councillor Helyn Clack.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

(260) None.

### 3. Requests for Dispensations

(261) None.

### 4. Minutes

(262) Minutes of the Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014, were agreed. Cllr Husband signed the minutes as a correct record.

### 5. Community Police Report

(263) PC Dom Loraine provided details of 3 crimes reported to have occurred in Buckland between 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015. One fraud offence involving an approach made by telephone to an elderly couple to suggest they had been a victim of fraud with the aim of extracting cash from them, an act of criminal damage to the SSSI adjacent to Buckland Lane BOAT and one incidence of making off without making payment for fuel at the Shell garage.

(264) PC Loraine advised that he may soon be exchanging roles with PC Lee Munday, who is currently in Leatherhead Town. **Action:** Clerk to write to Inspector Hamlyn to seek his assurance that:

- (i) there will be an effective transfer of knowledge from PC Loraine (prior to his new appointment) and from PCSO Williams (prior to his impending retirement) to PC Munday and PCSO Dave Sadler; and
- (ii) appropriate steps will be taken to ensure there are sufficient trained officers to make optimal use of the off road motorbikes to police our local BOAT

(265) It was noted that PC Dom Loraine had relayed an invitation to Inspector Richard Hamlyn to attend the Open Forum at the start of the next meeting of Council to be held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

### 6. Highways, Transport and Rights of Way

#### Road Safety

(266) At the December Council meeting, PCSO Sadler had advised Council that the Police Road Casualty Reduction Team were unwilling to undertake a traffic speed survey along the A25 because this section of road was not included in the Speed Management Plan.

PCSO Sadler had been asked to “point” Council towards an explanation as to how a location is included in the Speed Management Plan. The Clerk reported that PCSO Sadler had since forwarded a copy of the “SCC Setting Speed Limits Policy, dated 2014” and provided the following quote from the Police Casualty Reduction team:

*“Police activity has to be prioritised. Our primary responsibility is to reduce casualties and therefore any enforcement activity will be focused to this aim.”*

*Where speed related collisions have been identified, or where there is evidence of deliberate offending, police will provide regular enforcement. Other locations that have a speeding issue will still be considered and monitored, but may not be subject to regular enforcement.*

*Police neighbourhood panels facilitate requests for local police to focus on particular concerns for periods of up to 1 month and can be used to secure limited enforcement of speeding issues".* It was noted that this information had been forwarded to Cllrs Steed and Pryor.

- (267) Cllr Steed and PCSO Sadler had looked into the recent road traffic accident at the junction of Lawrence Lane and the A25 involving a motorcycle and car in collision. It was noted that speed had not been considered a contributory factor. District Cllr John Muggeridge had asked for due consideration to be given to the needs of local farmers should any refuge be considered. **Action:** Clerk to highlight Council's concern with the Highways team and to ask for Council to be invited for input should a safety review of the junction be undertaken.

*PC Loraine left the meeting.*

- (268) It was noted that Cllr Steed had prepared a response to Mr Neale's expressed concerns relating to the increasing incidence of larger vehicles on our small country lanes and the Clerk had forwarded it, together with an offer from Cllr Steed to meet with Mr Neale to discuss the response if he felt this would be helpful.

### **Airport Commission Consultation and Gatwick Airport**

- (269) Gatwick unzipped, a detailed analysis of the consultation documents that had been prepared by Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign ("GACC") had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting together with a transcript of a recent public meeting held in Crawley by the Airport Commission and draft advice notes issued by local parish councils and campaign groups.

Council, having discussed the implications for Buckland, voted against Gatwick Airport Limited's proposal to build a second runway at the Airport.

Council identified the following principal areas of concern – traffic congestion, rail overcrowding, pressure on public services (including but not limited to hospitals, schools, doctors surgeries and social care), increased demand for utilities, and increased pressure on the greenbelt due to the resultant increased housing need. **Actions:** Clerk to submit Council's response using the online form. Clerk to update the Parish News to include a guide to making a response and to include a link to the GACC information from the village website.

- (270) Gatwick Airport Limited ("GAL")'s Head of **Community Engagement**, Hannah Staunton had written to all local community groups local to Gatwick Airport to assess potential interest in a new GAL initiative to engage with local town and parish councils. Council expressed tentative support for the initiative and indicated a willingness to participate in an initial meeting.

### **Highways Maintenance**

- (271) Council welcomed news that the long awaited work to replace one of the welcome gates and chevrons to the east of the village centre had recently been completed and noted that a keep left arrow by the church had been removed. The Clerk advised that SCC Highways had recently stated that contractors had been tasked to deal with the damaged Vehicle activated sign by the Shell garage. **Action:** Clerk to continue to liaise with SCC Highways.
- (272) SCC Highways had asked if Council could establish the owner of land adjoining the footpath alongside the A25 between Shepherd's Walk and the wall to the Towered Barn and ask them to pay closer attention to pruning back trees and shrubs to help to keep the full width of footpath clear of vegetation. **Action:** Clerk to follow up on suggestions put forward as to the likely landowner.

- (273) SCC Highways had advised, since the last meeting, that a formal request had been issued to Mr Wilson requesting he take action to cut back his garden plants to restore sightlines to safeguard the safety of passengers using the bus shelter opposite the Village Shop.

### **Highways Localism**

- (274) The Clerk advised that following a conversation with Paul Manwaring, the SCC Highways Maintenance Engineer for Mole Valley, she had requested quotes from DG Trees and Mattree Tree Care for the removal of a sycamore tree from the highway verge adjacent to the bus shelter and behind the bench. As Paul had previously accepted SCC is responsible for this tree, its removal ought to be eligible for funding under Highways Localism. Council agreed the work would be beneficial, subject to funding being available to finance the task. **Action:** Clerk to progress.

### **B2032 Pebblehill Road Closures**

- (275) Despite weekly assurances from Sutton and East Surrey Water (“SESW”) of their commitment to complete the current work by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January, SCC Streetworks had stated that Pebblehill Road would remain closed until Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015. The Clerk was asked to continue to keep the local community updated via the email group.
- (276) SESW had advised that upon completion of the installation of the new water main in Pebblehill Road that the next stage of the work would see the team working along the A25 towards Haytor Kennels. SESW contractors have a further week of decommissioning work and have agreed with SCC Highways to complete these works during the Easter school holidays. The Clerk advised that Buckland Nurseries had asked both SESW and SCC Highways for assurance that the B2032 will be open over the Easter weekend a traditionally important trading period for garden centres. **Action:** Clerk to raise Buckland Nurseries concern with Cllr Helyn Clack.
- (277) It was noted that SCC Highways has announced major maintenance work along the stretch of the B2032 between the Pfizer roundabout and the junction with the A217 at Tadworth roundabout that will necessitate closure of the road. Traffic heading north to the A217 from Headley Common Road will be diverted down Pebblehill Road and along the A25 to join the northbound A217 at Reigate.
- (278) It was noted that Network Rail is undertaking major work along the North Downs Railway line and has requested a weekend closure of the Betchworth crossing and an overnight closure of the Rectory Lane crossing during the weekend of 24/5<sup>th</sup> January .

## **6. Planning**

### **MVDC Planning Notifications**

The following Local Planning Authority decision was noted:

- (279) MO/2014/1632/ADV: Installation of illuminated sign at Squires Garden Centre, Reigate Road, Reigate. RH2 9RE. Approved with conditions.

### **Planning Consultations**

- (280) Cllr Husband and the Clerk had attended a meeting of the **Buckland Liaison Group**, held on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2015 for which minutes had yet to be published. It was noted that while Buckland Estates had submitted their application papers Hanson had yet to submit revised restoration designs. Cllr Husband advised that setting a date for the next meeting had been deferred until Hanson had lodged a revised application and SCC had registered it.
- (281) It was noted that a response had been submitted to the consultation on the **SCC Draft Statement of Community Involvement**, consistent with previous input to SCC.
- (282) A link to the recently updated document, **Affordable Rural Housing – A Guide for Parish Councils** had been circulated to councillors. The document had been produced jointly by the Rural Housing Alliance and Rural Services Network.

## 9. Amenities

### Village Pond and Green

(283) The Clerk advised an application submitted to Hanson for a donation towards the cost of clearing unwanted vegetation from the village pond had been approved.

The request for matched funding had resulted in a donation of £450.00 and a letter of appreciation had been issued to Mr Weeks at Hanson. It was noted that with sand extraction now at an end Buckland will no longer be able to apply to this Hanson Community Fund. The Clerk confirmed a letter of thanks had been sent to Hanson.

(284) It was noted that Burleys had completed the work to redefine the footpath edges of the areas of maintained grass and to cut down the dead Michaelmas daisies from around the pond perimeter. The Clerk advised that a local resident had praised the recently completed work and expressed appreciation for the good job being done across the year by the team from Burleys.

**Actions:** Clerk to relay appreciation to Burleys and to arrange for a cheque for an amount of £330.00 including £55.00 Vat to be issued upon receipt of an appropriate invoice.

(285) It was noted that the Management Plan for the Pond and Green, adopted in July 2011, had an initial 5 year term. The Clerk advised that Simon Elson, Surrey County Council's Principal Environmental Enhancement Officer had confirmed he is willing (as author of the original report) to assist in its review. Council resolved to initiate a review of the plan towards the end of 2015 and to consult the village on any key proposals at the 2016 Annual Parish Meeting. **Action:** Clerk to liaise with Simon Elson and to programme the review.

## 10. Finance and Formalities

### Budget and Precept Request for the period April 2015 – March 2016

(286) Financial schedules setting out year to date spending and analysing full year forecast spending against the budget had been circulated to councillors in advance of the meeting. Variances were explained and a breakdown of the movements on the allocated reserves was provided.

(287) A Draft Budget, accompanied by a schedule of explanatory notes and draft assumptions had been circulated to councillors in advance of the meeting together with a "wish list" of potential expenditure proposals relating to amenity improvements.

(288) It was noted that the Finance team at MVDC had recently

(i) confirmed that a Council tax support grant of £750 will be provided for the 2015/16 financial year 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 3 year agreement reached in December 2013 that the concurrent grants for 2015/16 will equal the 2014/15 amount of £1875, 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 2015/16 concurrent grant to £1910.

(iii) advised a local tax base for Buckland Parish of £295.70 for 2015/16.

(289) Draft financials circulated to Councillors highlighted a year on year increase in committed costs of £350 and included £2500 election costs, reflecting advice recently issued by Democratic Services.

- (290) Council, having reviewed the current year forecast and draft budget resolved to
- (i) set budgeted expenditure for the 2015/16 financial year at £13,238 (2014/15: £10,750);
  - (ii) increase the precept request for the 2015/16 financial year to £8732 (2014/15 £8367), an amount that will require an increase in the band D precept of 1.9% and take the Band D Precept from £28.98 to £29.53. The precept request form was duly signed by Cllrs Husband and Horden. **Action:** Clerk to return the precept request to MVDC.
- (291) Council adopted the remaining assumptions and explanatory notes that had accompanied the financial projections.
- (292) Council noted that if the costs of a contested election are incurred that unallocated reserves will be sufficiently depleted to require any significant unbudgeted expenditure proposals to be deferred until the 2016/17 financial year. **Action:** Clerk to circulate schedules, updated to reflect decisions taken and to include outline forecasts to a 3 year time horizon. Clerk to pursue the expenditure proposals.
- (293) Council noted that SJ Newman had reaffirmed the pricing provided last autumn to complete **enhancement work to the posts and rails** alongside the A25 and agreed it would now be timely to seek financial support for this project. **Action:** Clerk.

### **Account Payments and Receipts**

- (294) The following payments were approved:
- (i) D G Tree Services £288.00 including £48.00 Vat, Removal of two trees from the village green;
  - (ii) Sheena Boyce £60.23, Incremental salary for Jan/Feb £15.95, mileage £7.80 and re-imburement for council expenses.
- (295) Approval was given for the Clerk to attend a SALC Networking Event on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at a cost of £72.00 including £12.00 Vat. **Action:** Clerk authorised to arrange for a cheque to be issued upon receipt of an invoice.
- (296) It was noted that £35.00, representing the sale of a further 14 walk booklets had been banked and that a cheque for £450 had been received from Hanson.
- (297) It was noted that Cllr Day had completed the first quarterly verification of the bank reconciliation schedules dated 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and had completed a verification of the bank reconciliation presented to this meeting of Council. No exceptions were identified.
- (298) The Clerk, responding to a query from Cllr Horden, confirmed that all Section 106 monies that MVDC had levied on developments in Buckland had already been paid across in the form of grants to the Parish Council.

### **Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Controls**

- (299) In accordance with advice set out in the Practitioners Guide to Governance and Accountability for Local Councils (2014), Council considered the effectiveness of its system of internal control.
- (300) Council reviewed the recently circulated risk assessment schedule and audit plan and concluded that both the risk assessment schedule and audit plan are relevant and effective.
- (301) Council, having given due consideration, resolved to confirm the appointment of Braidwood and Associates as Internal Auditor for the period covering the preparation and submission of the 2015 Annual Return on the basis of the currently adopted audit plan. **Action:** Clerk

## Transparency Code for Small Councils

(302) Council noted that

- (i) in 2012 the Government had entered into a 5 year agreement with a panel of auditors to undertake external audit of local councils. For Buckland the external audit is completed by BDO LLP. The current audit framework will continue to apply until 31 March 2017;
- (ii) the Government had previously announced an intention to introduce transparency rules in place of the external audit for public bodies with an annual turnover of less than £25,000;
- (iii) despite lobbying from NALC and SLCC (Society of Clerks) for small councils to have the choice to continue to opt for an external audit (much the simpler and probably cheaper option) Government has stated that the change will be mandatory;
- (iv) a Transparency Code for Small Councils was published in December 2014 with an effective date of 1 April 2015;
- (v) the guide to the new rules advises that financial help will be made available to assist councils with complying with the new rules;

Council agreed to keep the new rules under review and for the Clerk to maintain a timesheet to record incremental hours expended in connection with these new rules.

## 12. Forthcoming Council Meetings

- (303) The **Parish Council** confirmed that the next Parish Council Meeting will be held at 8pm on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in the Reading Room, noted that the **2015 Annual Meeting** of the **Parish Council** will be held at 8pm on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015 and that meetings of full Council are thereafter scheduled to be held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July, Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September, Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November, Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016.
- (304) The **2015 Annual Parish Meeting** will be held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015 in the Reading Room and commence at 7.30pm. Council agreed to extend an invitation to Simon Humphreys, Volunteer Site Manager for the Surrey Wildlife Trust local reserves at Dawcombe and Fraser Down to be this year's guest speaker. **Action:** Clerk.
- (305) The Clerk will attend a **Surrey Association Local Councils Update** on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in Felbridge.
- (306) It was noted that an invitation to the Clerk from the **Surrey Hills Off Road Working Group** to attend its forthcoming meeting on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015 had been passed on and accepted by Duncan Ferns. The group's Secretary had agreed to the substitution and would be circulating a copy of the meeting notes to Council.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10pm.

**Sheena Boyce, Clerk**

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