

BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held at 8pm on Monday 14th January 2019 in the Reading Room, Old Rd, Buckland.

Present:

Cllrs Husband (Chairman), Bourke, Cox, Horden, Jones, Pryor and Steed and the Clerk.

In attendance:

Two members of the public.

Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) Cllr Simon Budd joined during item 9.

1. Apologies for Absence

(221) D.Cllrs Budd and Muggeridge who had been required to attend MVDC training.

2. Declarations of Interest

(222) None.

3. Requests for Dispensations

(223) None.

4. Minutes

(224) Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th November 2018, were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

5. Open Forum

(225) Cllr Husband welcomed two residents and invited them each to speak:

- (i) one resident who has, over recent years, been converting part of Buckland Court Stables into a dwelling attended to make introductions and to observe Council's discussion of application MO/2018/2125.
- (ii) a second resident, who lives in part of Shagbrook, had attended in anticipation there would be discussion relating to Spring Tidy Events.

Council **resolved** to bring forward discussion of these two agenda items and to position the minutes under the relevant headings for ease of future reference.

6. Planning

Planning Applications

(226) MO/2018/2125: Conversion of garage to residential dwelling at Buckland Court Stables, Reigate Road, Buckland. Council noted receipt of a letter from a member of the public engaged in the renovation and restoration of historic buildings that had been sent to the Chair of the MVDC Development Control Committee, Mole Valley District Councillors and Buckland Parish Council. Council **resolved** to submit a representation to:

- (i) seek assurance that any permission will be conditional upon the permanent provision of adequate parking provision at the property
- (ii) ask for the need to safeguard the conservation area setting and respect its adjacency to the listed church to be taken into account as planning conditions are drafted;
- (iii) for consistent conditions to be imposed on the terrace of properties and for the planning authority to verify there have not been any breaches of conditions applying to sites within the curtilage of Buckland Court Stables; and
- (iv) request that the applicant be asked to review land registry documentation to ensure all relevant landowners have been notified.

Post meeting note: MVDC advised this application was withdrawn on 18th January 2019.

(227) MO/2018/1996: Installation of 2 No. red light safety cameras together with ancillary signage at Buckland Crossing, Rectory Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BL. Council noted details of this application had been forwarded to those residents who live north of the railway crossing who are signed up to the village email group and that the applicant had contacted Buckland Estates. Council, having noted the absence of adverse feedback, **resolved** to ratify the decision, taken following consultation with Cllrs not to submit any comments with respect to this application.

- (228) Council **resolved** to ratify the decisions, taken following consultation with Cllrs, to respond as follows to the planning applications outlined below:
- (i) MO/2018/1882: Erection of replacement garage following removal of existing garage and pool house at Site of Garden Cottage, Sandy Lane, Buckland, RH3 7AA.
Council had written to query whether the scale of the proposed garage would be consistent with Mole Valley Local Plan Policy RUD9 and asked MVDC to ensure any permission granted included conditions consistent with those imposed on the site when permission was granted for the replacement dwelling. Council noted a follow up response had been submitted to acknowledge the submission of a revision to lower the height of the roof.
 - (ii) MO/2018/2024: Erection of single storey rear extension at Buckland Cop, Rectory Lane, Buckland RH3 7DY. No comment.
 - (iii) MO/2018/1737/1: Non-material amendment in respect of amendment to roof design of approved replacement garden room at The Old Rectory, Rectory Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BH. No comment.
- (229) MO/2018/1848: Demolish existing sales building and remove linked canopy and LPG enclosure, erect new single storey sales building, gated timber fenced compound area with bins and plant units. Provide 12 No. new customer parking bays at Buckland Garage, Reigate Road, Buckland, RH3 7ED. Council noted that Shell's specialist planning team recently appointed new planning and highways consultants to review the points raised in the representations and letters of objection to this application and give consideration to how the matters of concern can best be addressed.

One member of the public left the meeting.

Mole Valley District Council ("MVDC") Planning Notifications

- (230) The following Local Planning Authority decisions were noted:
- (i) MO/2018/1608: Erection of single storey garage to front of property at Cop House, Old Road, Buckland, RH3 7DY. Refused.
 - (ii) MO/2018/1653: Erection of single storey oak framed garden room at rear of Pines Cottage, Dungates Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BD. Approved with conditions.
 - (iii) MO/2018/1737: Erection of a replacement garden room at The Old Rectory, Rectory Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BH. Approved with conditions.
 - (iv) MO/2018/1737/1: Non-material amendment in respect of amendment to roof design of approved replacement garden room at The Old Rectory, Rectory Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BH. Approved with conditions.
 - (v) MO/2018/1822: Single storey extensions made under Part A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) 2013 at 5 Tranquil Dale, Buckland, RH3 7EE. Confirmation issued that prior approval is not required.
 - (vi) MO/2018/1882: Erection of replacement garage following removal of existing garage and pool house at Site of Garden Cottage, Sandy Lane, Buckland, RH3 7AA. Approved with conditions.
 - (vii) MO/2018/1996: Installation of 2 No. red light safety cameras together with ancillary signage at Buckland Crossing, Rectory Lane, Buckland, RH3 7BL. Approved with conditions.

7. Transport – Airports and Highways

- (231) Cllr Cox, having attended the **GACC AGM** on Friday 23rd November 2018 at Cophorne and a **Gatwick Airport Masterplan Consultation Event** on Saturday 24th November 2018 in Horley had prepared a written update. Council noted that the Clerk, prior to submitting a response to the Gatwick Airport Masterplan Consultation had circulated Cllr Cox's update and a guidance note issued by GACC and consulted Cllrs.

Highways

(232) Council noted that:

- (i) although SCC Highways had advised the **second cut of rural verges** would be completed during October 2018, the contractor tasked with cutting the verges through Buckland chose to complete the task in early December;
- (ii) the Clerk had submitted a report (with photographs) to highlight damage caused to the verge between Lawrence Lane and Tapwood Lane, sections of verge alongside the footpath to the East of Shagbrook that were missed, and earth/vegetation spread across the footpath between Squires Garden Centre and Shagbrook;
- (iii) whilst SCC Highways had provided assurance their contractor would be required to return to make repairs to the section of verge between Lawrence Lane and Tapwood Lane (northern edge of A25) the damage had yet to be “made good”;
- (iv) SCC Highways had managed to schedule a visit to cut back the earth and vegetation along around half the length of the footpath between Squires Garden Centre and Shagbrook and hope to be able to make a return visit before the spring growing season commences.

(233) Council noted that:

- (i) the SCC Mole Valley Local Committee, when it met in December 2018, approved a programme of highway works to be funded from its delegated capital and revenue budgets;
- (ii) the Integrated Transport Scheme Programme for 2019/20 includes an allocation of £5000 to fund the design of a **“pedestrian island to improve access to the existing bus stops for the mobility impaired”** between Shagbrook and Squires Garden Centre on the A25;
- (iii) whilst the Provisional Integrated Transport Scheme Programme for 2020/21 includes an allocation of £30,000 to fund construction, the proposal emphasises that the *“programme for 2020/21 is indicative and subject to confirmation”*.

(234) Council **resolved** to ratify a response issued to the Chairman of the Betchworth and Buckland Society (B&BSoc) following advice of a **B&BSoc Committee request to SCC Cllr Helyn Clack** for one or more vehicle activated signs to be installed in Old Road.

The response provided a rationale for the Parish Council’s objection to the request, provided a position statement and referred to the extensive consultation undertaken with the village prior to adopting its current policy and practice.

Council noted that the B&BSoc Committee did not appear to have undertaken any consultation with either residents of Old Road or with the B&BSoc membership prior to submitting its request to SCC Cllr Clack. Council **resolved** to task the Clerk to write to Cllr Clack to state Council’s objection to the proposal. **Action:** Clerk.

8. Amenities

Village Website

(235) Council noted:

- (i) Design Lynx, the company that provides support and hosting for the village website had advised changes to the Wordpress (WP) software will need to be programmed before the recently launched WP5.0.2 can be applied;
- (ii) if the village website stays on WP4.9.9 it will no longer receive security updates, leaving it more vulnerable to hackers as potential security issues would not be addressed;
- (iii) this is the first major WP upgrade since the website was relaunched four years ago and Design Lynx, who are recommending implementing the changes has provided a quote of £624 ex Vat.
- (iv) the Clerk proposal to reallocate funds from Council Running Costs to Parish Amenities to fund the upgrade

Council **resolved** to instruct Design Lynx to proceed with the upgrade.

Amenity Improvements - Village Footpaths

- (236) Council recorded a vote of thanks to Buckland Estate for contributing to this year's effort by agreeing to compost the green matter removed from the footpaths and for the loan of the estate trailer.
- (237) Council noted:
- (i) the team of three operatives, supplied by Burleys, had now completed six days cutting back the footpaths alongside the southern edge of the A25;
 - (ii) SCC Highways had since inspected the footpath and undertaken several minor repairs to safeguard footpath users;
 - (iii) the Estate's support, by removing the need to hire skips, had made it possible to clear the stretch of footpath to the west of the village centre;
 - (iv) receipt of positive feedback from several residents;
 - (v) a recommendation from Burleys to consider scheduling weed control treatments to reduce the future growth of vegetation on the footpaths;
 - (vi) a need for residents to play their part by regularly cutting back plants rooted within their property that overhang footpaths to minimise the need for contractors to be paid (or volunteers to be recruited) to clear leaf fall from the footpaths.

Actions: All to encourage residents to help to maintain our local rights of way.

Amenity Improvements – Potential Volunteer Effort

- (238) Cllr Bourke suggested potential dates on which he could, assisted by local resident Mark Papworth (a neighbour of Cllr Bourke), be available to lead a volunteer event to clear the area of overgrown scrubland close to the parish border listed in the minutes of the July 2018 meeting. Council noted that the objective of clearing this section of land is create a safe link between Footpath 466 and the A25 roadside footpath. Council, having considered a series of queries raised by Mr Papworth emphasised the following:

- (i) A risk assessment must be completed prior to any parish council event and provided to the Clerk in good time to allow the parish council insurer to be consulted;
- (ii) Volunteers participating in a parish council led volunteer event must not undertake activity within the extent of land maintained by SCC as a public highway; this includes the footpath path alongside the A25;
- (iii) The use of powered tools is restricted to appropriately qualified operators with certification acceptable to both the parish council insurers and relevant landowners. Their use is not allowed in presence of volunteers at a parish council event.

Council **resolved** to accept an offer from Cllrs Husband and Bourke to work together to prepare a method statement for the proposed works and complete a risk assessment.

- (239) Council noted three small areas of land that could be improved if one or more spring volunteer event were to be held:
- (i) An area of bare earth has been exposed following the removal (by British Telecom) of the redundant phone kiosk and base from the verge adjacent to the A25 in the centre of the village;
 - (ii) when Burleys focused their effort towards the western village boundary and cleared the surface of the footpath that crosses the wide verge outside numbers 1-6 Tranquil Dale they were able to expose part of a hard-surfaced footpath in the verge fronting the Shell garage. A further section needs to be cleared to complete the task;
 - (iii) the verge around the top corner of Old Road and between the bench and the bus shelter is in need of a tidy-up;

and further noted that the area of land adjacent to Rectory Lane that was the focus of last year's Spring tidy would benefit from a second visit.

Council **resolved** to accept an offer from Cllr Jones to work with the Clerk to coordinate events during the mornings of two consecutive days – Saturday 2nd March and Sunday 3rd March 2019. **Action:** All to confirm availability to Cllr Jones or the Clerk.

9. Finance

Budget and Precept Request for the period April 2019 – March 2020

- (240) 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 2019 had been circulated to Cllrs accompanied by a “wish list” of potential expenditure proposals relating to amenity improvements.
- (241) It was noted that the Finance team at MVDC had recently:
- (i) advised Council that a proposal to apply a 3.3% increase to the 2018/19 council tax support scheme payment of £796 is being prepared for consideration by MVDC and agreed it would be reasonable, for the purposes of preparing the draft budget to assume the 2019/20 figure will be set at £822. 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) advised Council that the agreement to apply an inflationary formula to the concurrent service payment equal to that which is being applied to District council tax is being prepared for consideration by MVDC. Whilst MVDC had yet to decide exactly what increase shall be applied it will be no more than the greater of 3% and the equivalent percentage of a £5 increase to Band D council tax. For the purposes of preparing a draft budget an increase of 2.945% had been assumed and a concurrent payment grant of £2127 (£2066 2018/19); and
 - (iii) notified a local tax base for Buckland Parish of £303.40 for 2019/20 compared to £301.40 for 2018/19.
 - (iv) Council, having reviewed the current year forecast and draft budget concluded that with SCC operating under severe budgetary pressures and MVDC needing to limit growth in expenditure there is a continued need for the Parish Council to ensure it can address the needs of the parish whilst maintaining appropriate financial reserves. Council remains mindful that if referendum principles are extended to small parish councils that Council’s ability to raise the precept without incurring the significant cost of a referendum will be capped.
- (242) Council **resolved** to:
- (i) increase the budget for staffing costs;
 - (ii) provide a training budget sufficient to fund post-election training for any newly elected councillors;
 - (iii) keep “winter maintenance of the footpaths alongside the A25” the priority amenity improvement and allocate sufficient revenue funding for a summer strim and application of weed control to safeguard the amenity improvement; and
 - (iv) budget discretionary expenditure of £2000 for amenity improvements.
- (243) Council **resolved** to:
- (i) set budgeted expenditure for the 2019/20 financial year at £17,720;
 - (ii) release funds from the election reserve of £4000 in the event a contested Parish Council election is held in May 2019 to settle any costs invoiced by MVDC;
 - (iii) set the precept at a level, given the council tax base of £303.40 (notified by MVDC) to be equivalent to 2.945% (rounded down to 2 decimal places) higher than the 2018/19 Band D Parish Council Tax charge of £44.10 (i.e. $1.02945 * £44.10 = £45.39$);
 - (iv) submit a precept request for the 2019/20 financial year of £13,771 i.e. $£45.39 * £303.40$. The precept request form was duly signed by Cllrs Husband and Pryor
Action: Clerk to return the precept request to MVDC with a request for the MVDC Finance Team to provide an opportunity for the request to be revised in the event MVDC resolves to apply a different uplift to the District element of Council tax.

- (244) Council noted that whilst the budgeted financial reserves (i.e. unallocated cash balance) at 31st March 2020 would be £1000 less than at the start of the year these unallocated cash balances would still amount to between six and seven months expenditure and therefore comply with the financial guidelines that are issued to parish councils.
- (245) Council **resolved** to adopt the remaining explanatory notes and assumptions that had accompanied the financial projections. **Action:** Clerk to provide the Chairman with revised schedules to reflect Council's decisions prior to circulating to all Cllrs.

Account Payments and Receipts

- (246) Council noted a year to date cash book, bank reconciliation and analysis of current year expenditure against budget had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- (247) Council had established a direct debit in favour of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to facilitate the annual renewal fee for continued registration, as required under the Data Protection Act 2018. It was noted the ICO had advised the annual fee for 2019, a sum of £35.00 will be debited on 15th January 2019.
- (248) Council noted that:
- (i) a payment for £2469.60, including £411.60 Vat, to G. Burley and Sons Limited had been issued in accordance with minute 2018/19 :191;
 - (ii) PAYE of £81 had been paid to HMRC on the additional hours of £544.00 and that an equivalent amount had been credited to the bank account the same day. Cllrs Husband and Steed, having checked both entries appear on the cashbook initialled the bank statement.
- (249) Council **resolved** to approve the following payments:
- (i) G. Burley and Sons Limited £1,180.80 including £196.80 Vat, Winter grounds maintenance;
 - (ii) Surrey Hills Society £25, Annual Membership Renewal;
 - (iii) Cllr Cox £21.40, Travel expenses to attend GACC AGM, Gatwick Airport Masterplan Consultation;
 - (iv) Sheena Boyce £65.19 including 81p Vat, Re-imburement council expenditure including travelling expenses £55.31.
- (249) Council noted that a £50.00 donation, raised through the sale of walk booklets, had been credited to the Parish Council bank account since the November meeting.
- (250) Council **resolved** to approve a proposal to pay £96.00 including £16 Vat for the Clerk to attend the Society of Local Council Clerks South East Regional Training Seminar in Maidenhead on Wednesday 13th March 2019. **Action:** Clerk to issue cheque upon receipt of appropriate invoice.
- (251) Council noted that Cllr Steed had verified the bank balances on the bank reconciliation against the bank statements, initialled both documents, and confirmed that no unreported exceptions had been identified in the transactions reported since 12th November 2018.

10. Formalities

Annual review of effectiveness.

- (252) In accordance with advice set out in the Practitioners Guide to Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England (2018), Council considered the effectiveness of its system of internal control and reviewed the measures in place to prevent and detect fraud and corruption.
- (253) Council noted that the Financial Regulations had last been reviewed prior to the 2018 Annual Meeting, no changes were being proposed and the next review is scheduled for May 2019.
- (254) Council, having reviewed the recently circulated risk assessment schedule and audit plan concluded its system of internal control remains effective, its risk assessment is relevant and effective.

- (255) Council, having given due consideration, **resolved** to appoint Braidwood Wheeler & Co as Internal Auditor for the period covering the preparation and publication of the 2019 Annual Return based on the currently adopted audit plan. **Action:** Clerk.
- (256) Council noted that a 2019 Diary had been purchased to replace the book used since March 2011 for recording the regular **visual checks of parish council assets** and that there were no outstanding actions as at 31st December 2018. **Action:** Clerk to retain the book with other documents relating to Council's Insurance Policy.
- (257) Council, having given due consideration, **resolved** to ratify the response dated 14th December 2018 issued in response to a **Freedom of Information Request** received via www.whatdotheyknow.org. The enquiry had questioned whether the Parish Council is aware of its obligations, as a public body, to comply with payroll reforms (commonly referred to as IR35 rules) that were introduced April 2017. Council noted the response had issued affirmative responses.
- (258) Council **resolved** to ratify the Policy on Signs and Road Markings that had been updated to reflect changes discussed when Council met on 12th November 2018. **Action:** Clerk to insert January 2021 as date for next scheduled review and to publish the updated document.
- (259) Council noted that MVDC had circulated information relating to the 2019 Parish Council Elections due to be held on Thursday 2nd May 2018 and announced an intention to hold a meeting for prospective candidates on the evening of Monday 25th February 2018. Cllr Jones indicated an intention to attend the meeting.

Surrey Police

- (260) The Mole Valley Neighbourhood Police Team had advised three **reported crimes** in Buckland since 12th November relating to drink driving, a vulnerable adult (police made a welfare check) and criminal damage to a vehicle. A further twelve incidents occurred; one road traffic collision with injury, one police stop, one highway disruption, one road related offence, one vehicle nuisance, one relating to pets/domesticated animals, four reports of suspicious circumstances and two reports of concern for safety.
- (261) Council noted Surrey Police had recently issued encouragement to residents to use on-line forms to report **anti-social driving** and/or **road traffic incidents** they observe and that links to each of the forms had been included in parish updates.

Updates from meetings and events

- (262) Cllr Jones advised attending the **Surrey ALC AGM and Autumn Conference** on Thursday 15th November 2018 at Dorking Halls had been worthwhile with several informative presentations including one from Chief Superintendent Alison Barlow who had acknowledged "lack of engagement" had been identified as an issue whilst cautioning that limited police resource continues to restrict attendance at community meetings.
 SCC Chief Executive Joanna Killian and SCC Cllrs Colin Kemp and Mike Goodman engaged in a Q&A session and stressed they are keen to make it easier for parish councils to act in support of their community. Council noted that SCC Cllr Colin Kemp asks Parish Councils encountering "blocks" to contact him by email with a copy to the local SCC Cllr.
- (263) Cllr Pryor had attended the **River Mole Catchment Partnership Annual Event** on Wednesday 14th November 2018 at Unum, Dorking. Surrey Wildlife Trust, aided by many valued volunteers, had explained how they continue to create meanders along the River Mole to slow the rate of wet weather water run-off and advised improving water species is demonstrating the good water quality. The event had included a useful legal update on Land Drainage and Water Courses.
- (264) Cllr Pryor and the Clerk attended a **Surrey Hills Symposium** on Wednesday 28th November 2018 during which a panel debated whether National Park status would deliver incremental benefit to the Surrey Hills. The Surrey Hills Board had highlighted the Surrey Hills AONB consultation on its Draft Five Year Management Plan and a link had since been included in a parish update and published on the village website.
- (265) Council noted that the December meeting of the **SCC Mole Valley Local Committee** had been webcast and resolved to express its appreciation to the relevant officers at MVDC and SCC and to SCC Cllr. Clack for supporting the parish council's request. **Action:** Clerk.

- (266) Council noted that **updates** issued by **MVDC, SCC, NALC, SALC** and the **Surrey Hills Society**, that had been circulated to Cllrs and highlighted within Parish Updates had included:
- (i) MVDC Consultation on its draft Customer Service Strategy;
 - (ii) Consultation launched by Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner seeking support for a £2 per month increase in Band D Council tax to support a stronger neighbourhood presence across Surrey;
- and encouraged residents to respond to a series of consultations underway at SCC.

11. Forthcoming Meetings

- (267) The **Parish Council** confirmed the next full Council Meeting will be held on Monday 11th March 2019 and subsequent meetings are scheduled to be held on 13th May, 8th July, 9th September and 11th November 2019 and on Monday 13th January and Monday 9th March 2020.
- (268) The 2019 **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 25th March 2019 in the Reading Room, Old Road, Buckland.
- (269) Cllr Pryor will attend a meeting of the **Rural Crime Engagement Panel** at 7.30pm on Wednesday 23rd January 2019 at MVDC Pippbrook offices.
- (270) Cllr Pryor will attend a meeting of the **Surrey Hills Byways Working Group** at 2pm on Monday 11th February 2019 at Warren Farm Barns.
- (271) Cllr Pryor and Martin Boyce, Webmaster will attend the **Mole Valley Rural Summit** on Tuesday 26th February 2019 at Hartsfield Manor.
- (272) **Spring Village Tidy** events, starting at 10am will be held on Saturday 2nd March 2019 and Sunday 3rd March 2019.
- (273) Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers will lead a **village pond clearance** on Sunday 8th September 2019.

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

Sheena Boyce, Clerk

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