

BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held at 8pm on Monday 10th January 2022 in Buckland Reading Room.

Present:

Cllrs Bourke, Horden, Husband (Chair), Jones, Pryor, and Steed.

In attendance via zoom

The Clerk, Surrey County Council (SCC) Cllr Helyn Clack, and two members of the public (including Ianthe Cox).

1. Apologies for Absence

(186) Council **resolved** to approve the reason for Cllr Cox's absence. Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) Cllrs Paul Potter and Simon Budd.

2. Declarations of Interest

(187) None.

3. Requests for Dispensations

(188) None.

4. Minutes

(189) Council **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 8th November 2021. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. Open Forum

(190) The Chair welcomed the two members of the public who advised they had attended to observe proceedings. No issues were raised.

6. Planning

(191) Council noted the SCC Minerals and Waste Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation will close before Council next meets. Council **resolved** to delegate authority to the Clerk to submit a response to the consultation. **Action:** All to review the consultation documents and provide feedback to the Clerk by 31st January 2022.

New Planning Applications

(192) MO/2021/2110: Erection of two storey extension to North elevation and single storey extension to West elevation at Coombe Hayes, Pebblehill Road, Betchworth, Surrey, RH3 7BP. Council **resolved** to ratify the response submitted that had requested the inclusion of conditions to control external lighting and limit permitted development rights.

(193) MO/2021/2157: Discharge of conditions 3, 4, 10, 12, 13 and 14 of approved planning permission MO/2021/0547 for the erection of 1 No. dwelling with associated landscaping, parking and access following demolition of existing barn at Land South of Betchworth Village Hall, Station Road, Surrey, Betchworth, RH3 7DF. Council **resolved** to ratify the objection to this application that included a proposed extension to the residential curtilage, a response that had set out issues and concerns consistent with responses submitted to previous applications on this land.

(194) MO/2021/1388: Revised submission re: Erection of new single storey dwelling in the grounds of Yew Tree Cottage following demolition of existing barn, garage and out-buildings at Yew Tree Cottage, Reigate Road, Buckland, Surrey, RH3 7BG. Council **resolved** to submit a strong objection to this proposed erection of a new dwelling in the Green Belt and to ask MVDC Cllr Potter to consider supporting Council's request for the application to be referred for determination by the MVDC Development Management Committee if the case officer is minded to recommend approval.

(195) MO/2021/2129: Conversion of existing garage to habitable accommodation and creation of new parking area on adjacent land at Middle Tower, Buckland Court Stables, Reigate Road, Buckland, Surrey. Council **resolved** to submit a response seeking confirmation the area allocated to parking will (i) be sufficient to comply with parking policy guidelines, (ii) be required to remain available to the property in perpetuity; and (iii) be equipped with an EV charging point.

(196) Council, having considered each of the following three applications, **resolved** not to submit any comment:

- (i) MO/2021/2129: Reduce height and spread by up to 2 metres and crown thin Crab Apple by 15%, reduce height and spread of Silver Birch by up to 4 metres. And laterally reduce Liquidamber tree by up to 2 metres at Street Farm Cottage, Rectory Lane, Buckland, Surrey RH3 7BH;
- (ii) MO/2021/2272: Reduce lateral branches of limes on south canopy by 4 metres at Grange Lodge, Rectory Lane, Buckland, Surrey RH3 7BH; and
- (iii) MO/2021/2307: Various Tree works at 4 Buckland Court, Reigate Road, Buckland, Surrey RH3 7EA.

Planning Notifications

(197) Council noted the following Local Planning Authority planning notifications:

- (i) MO/2021/1925: Removal of existing outbuilding and replace with garden building at Cop End, Old Road, Buckland, Surrey, RH3 7DY Approved with conditions.
- (ii) MO/2021/2165: Crown reduce one Willow tree by 3.5 metres on Buckland Village Green, Rectory Lane, Buckland, Surrey, RH3 7BH. No objection.
- (iii) MO/2021/1863: Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development in respect of a single storey rear extension at Vine Lodge, Old Road, Buckland, Betchworth, Surrey, RH3 7DZ. Appeal commenced.

7. Highways and Rights of Way

Sleep disturbance -when M25 overnight traffic diverted via A25

(198) Cllr Steed updated Council on approaches he had made to both National Highways and the contractor appointed by National Highways to maintain the section of M25 through Surrey following the formal adoption of an A217/A25/A24 diversion route between J8 and J9 of the M25. Cllr Steed, having received initial feedback from the contractor in response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request submitted to National Highways advised he is currently awaiting additional feedback from the contractor and had recently submitted a second FOI request to National Highways. Council noted the aims of this initiative are to:

- (i) be able to provide those local residents who consider their wellbeing is being adversely impacted by noise disturbance when M25 traffic is being diverted along the A25 Reigate Road with clear advice as to whom to report their concern;
- (ii) to secure a commitment from the relevant highways body to provide advance notice of closures that will involve the use of the A25 Reigate Road as a diversion route;
- (iii) to secure a commitment from Surrey Highways to liaise with National Highways and the contractor to ensure full closures are used sparingly and not simply to minimise operational costs being incurred by the contractor;
- (iv) to seek a commitment from Highways England to adopt a wide area signing strategy to direct traffic approaching from a distance to avoid altogether the southern section of the M25 during such closures.

(199) SCC Cllr Clack provided assurance to Council that she fully supports Council's approach and will continue to apply pressure to Surrey Highways to provide guidance on submitting noise nuisance complaints and to commit to engage with National Highways and their contractor to address the complaints.

(200) SCC Cllr Clack expressed a wish to provide input to an update being prepared by Cllr Steed for publication on the village website and circulation via the email group. Cllr Steed indicated a target publication date of 31st January 2022, by which time he hoped to have heard back from both National Highways and the contractor. **Action:** Cllr Clack to provide SCC input by 31st January 2022.

20s Plenty for Surrey Campaign

(201) Council noted receipt of a request from “20s Plenty for Surrey”, a campaign seeking the introduction of 20mph speed limits in all towns and villages across the County. Council, having considered the wider implications, noted that the current traffic regulations for implementing 20mph speed limits necessitate measures to reduce the average mean road speed to below 24mph before a speed limit can be imposed and that such measures include (but are not be limited to):

- (i) the introduction of a considerable number of new roadside traffic signs, an action that would run counter to Council’s decluttering policy and risk urbanisation of our rural parish;
- (ii) a requirement to install physical features (such as chicanes, raised carriageway humps or other road restrictions) on any sections of road where existing mean speeds exceed 24mph in addition to the additional signage; and
- (iii) a potential requirement for signs to be illuminated and or street lighting to be installed; and

resolved not to extend its support to the proposal. SCC Cllr Clack, having listened to consideration of this matter endorsed Council’s response. No further action required.

Betchworth Parish Council Proposal to install Information Signs on the A25

- (202) Council **resolved** to approve a draft communication addressed to Betchworth Parish Council that had previously been circulated to Cllrs, the Clerk to Betchworth Parish Council and SCC Cllr Clack.
- (203) Council noted that SCC Cllr Clack advised she had initiated a request to be updated by the relevant SCC Highways Officer and would share learning with Council. **Action:** Clerk to liaise with SCC Cllr Clack and seek an opportunity to share details of Council’s approach to Road Signs and Markings with the relevant Highways Officers.
- (204) Council noted Betchworth Parish Council had acknowledged Council’s objection to the proposed installation of a Betchworth gateway as a parish boundary marker, had advised an approach had since been made to SCC Highways to discuss alternative locations and committed to engage with Council pursuant to agreeing a suitable way forward.
- (205) Council **resolved** to record its support for Cllr Steed’s statement that “the two sets of gateways in Buckland are positioned alongside the A25 because the A25 cuts through the hub of the village; with the gateway to the west of Tranquil Dale so positioned because of the need for drivers to recognise the carriageway no longer has open fields along both sides – instead, immediately after the reduction in speed limit, they need to exercise caution as they will encounter a busy road junction shared between the local residents of Tranquil Dale and The Shell garage.
- (206) Council **resolved** to accept Cllr Steed’s offer to liaise with any of the Betchworth Parish Cllrs who might wish to enage on highways matters. **Action:** Clerk to provide support to Cllr Steed.

A25 Roadside Footways

- (207) Council **resolved** to issue a letter to SCC to express appreciation for the footway reconstruction on the section of the A25 footway between the Shell garage and Shepherds Walk, work completed since Council last met on 8th November 2021. **Action:** Clerk.
- (208) Council noted the winter maintenance to the A25 footways between the village centre and Squires Garden Centre had been completed by a team from Burleys, a task that had taken 85 man hours. Council **resolved** to task the Clerk to relay Council’s appreciation for a “job well done” to the team at Burleys. **Action:** Clerk.
- (209) SCC Cllr Clack, responding to a question from Council, acknowledged that the SCC commitment to No Mow May last year had created problems along the A25 footways. **Action:** Cllr Clack to seek clarification from SCC officers as to when the first rural cut is likely to be scheduled to enable Council to consider whether it may be advisable to schedule a Spring maintenance visit.

Rights of Way

- (210) Council noted the Clerk had joined the Network Rail Level Crossings Manager to explain the rationale for the request Network Rail had submitted to SCC Countryside Access during Q1 2021 to ask SCC to consider a proposal to improve the accessibility of local rights of way in Buckland by re-routing a footpath.
- (211) Council **resolved** to record votes of thanks to:
- (i) SCC Cllr Clack, following receipt of a £1045 grant from her SCC Community Grant; funding that enables the last of three stiles included on the Definitive Statement to be replaced with gates during the current financial year in addition to scheduled surface improvements to FP475, on a matched funding basis; and
 - (ii) Buckland Estate for agreeing to install the three gates (delivered);
- and to authorise the Clerk to raise a payment to Centrewire for £1,334.40 including £222.40 Vat, upon receipt of the appropriate invoice.

8. Amenities

Pond and Village Green Management Plan 2022-2027

- (212) Council noted a Draft Pond and Village Green Management Plan 2022 – 2027 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.
- (213) Council **resolved** to record a vote of appreciation for Simon Elson, who:
- (i) as Surrey County Council’s Lead Officer for the Open Standing Water Habitat Action Plan (HAP) within Surrey’s Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) had prepared the draft plan;
 - (ii) as an active member of the Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers had led three volunteer pond clearance events during 2021; and
 - (iii) had attended the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting to provide an update to the local community and receive input to this review of the plan.
- (214) Council, having given due consideration to the Draft Pond and Village Green Management Plan 2022 – 2027, **resolved** to adopt the Plan with immediate effect. **Action:** Clerk to extract the actions from the newly adopted plan into an action list.
- (215) Council noted MVDC had granted permission for a crown reduction of the willow tree to be undertaken and DG Trees had agreed to complete the work prior to bud burst.
- (216) Council **resolved** to authorise the Clerk to submit an application to request a £1000 grant from SCC Cllr Clack’s Member Allocation to enable amenity improvements on the village green to commence during the current financial year. **Action:** Clerk to submit application and, if successful to liaise with Kears to agree an earlier than planned start date for the work otherwise budgeted to be completed in 2022/23.
- (217) Council **resolved** to record a vote of thanks to Brockham Parish Council for extending the opportunity to Buckland residents to recycle their Christmas trees, and to Brockham Parish Cllr Jason Keen for overseeing the tree shredding.
- (218) Council noted:
- (i) it had not proved practical to participate in an SCC initiative to offer 100 whips and 10 standards (later amended to feathers) to all parish councils across the county;
 - (ii) as more details of the offer were released, the offer had proved to be conditional upon the parish council committing to enter into a lengthy legal agreement which, in Buckland’s case, would have been further complicated by potential planting sites not being located on land owned by the parish council;
 - (iii) the process had been further complicated by the draft legal agreement being held up within the SCC legal department;
 - (iv) a preliminary review, that had identified several “species dependant” planting locations on Buckland Estate land had been shared with the SCC team leading the initiative who now propose to liaise directly with Buckland Estate, as landowner later this year.

9. Finance and Risk Management

Account Payments and Receipts

- (219) Council noted Cllr Jones had verified the bank balances entered on the Q3 bank reconciliation against the bank statements and having reviewed the cashbook against the bank reconciliation, signed the cashbook to confirm no anomalies had arisen during the period 1st October 2021 – 31st December 2021.
- (220) Council noted financial schedules circulated in advance of the meeting had included a year-to-date cash book and analysis versus budget and bank reconciliation and **resolved** to adopt the full year forecast that projected the higher than budgeted cost of the winter maintenance work (£1400) will be partially offset by lower council running costs (£550), partly funded by donations generated by the sale of walk booklets (£313) and the release of contingencies (£350) with the balance (£187) funded from unallocated reserves.
- (221) Council noted the following budgeted payments issued since the November meeting:
- (i) Amazon Services Europe SARL £57.50 including £9.60 Vat, Tools re amenity maintenance;
 - (ii) Pixham Business Supplies £88.05 including £14.67 Paper and sundries
 - (iii) Amazon Services Europe SARL £20.41 including £3.41 Vat, Tools re amenity maintenance;
 - (iv) HMRC £52.95, PAYE liability re December salary payment;
- (222) Council **resolved** to approve the following payments:
- (i) G Burley & Sons Ltd £3,240.00 including £540.00 Vat, Winter maintenance work to A25 roadside footways;
 - (ii) Information Commissioner Office £35 (by direct debit to Unity Bank); Renewal of Annual Registration Fee : Data Protection
 - (iii) HMRC £52.95, PAYE liability re January salary payment.
- (223) Council noted the following amounts had been credited to the Parish Council bank account since 8th November 2021:
- (i) £86.54 Community Infrastructure Levy;
 - (ii) £1045.00 grant from SCC; and
 - (iii) a £50.00 donation, generated through the sale of walk booklets.

Budget and Precept Request for the period April 2022 – March 2023

- (224) Council noted a draft budget accompanied by a schedule of explanatory notes and draft assumptions and a copy of the latest full year forecast to 31st March 2022 had been circulated to Cllrs accompanied by a “wish list” of potential expenditure proposals relating to amenity improvements.
- (225) Council, having reviewed the current year forecast and draft budget, concluded that as SCC and MVDC budgets remaining subject to economic uncertainty it is reasonable to anticipate a continued need for the Parish Council to ensure it can meet the needs of the parish whilst maintaining appropriate financial reserves.
- (226) Council also noted the need to remain mindful that if the government decides to extend referendum principles to parish councils such a change would limit Council’s ability to increase the precept in future years without incurring the significant cost of a referendum.
- (227) Council noted the Finance team at MVDC had recently:
- (i) advised Council that a proposal to apply a 3% increase to the 2021/22 concurrent service payment of £2,231 is being prepared for consideration by MVDC and agreed it would be reasonable, for the purposes of preparing a draft budget, to assume the 2022/23 figure will be set at £2,298;

- (ii) advised Council a proposal to apply a 3% increase to the 2021/22 council tax support scheme payment of £862 is being prepared for consideration by MVDC and agreed it would be reasonable, for the purposes of preparing the draft budget, to assume the 2022/23 figure will be set at £888; and
- (iii) notified a local tax base for Buckland Parish of £324.00 for 2022/23 compared to £303.90 for 2021/22.

(228) Council **resolved** to:

- (i) set the salary budget at £9,725;
- (ii) budget discretionary expenditure of £1,000 for amenity improvements; and
- (iii) provide for £2,700 revenue expenditure for “maintenance of the footways alongside the A25”, in line with the current year spend, to ensure the investment that has already been made to improve the A25 footways continues to be safeguarded until such time as SCC Highways can be persuaded to invest in further footway reconstruction.

(229) Council **resolved** to:

- (i) set budgeted expenditure for the 2022/23 financial year at £19,691.00.
- (ii) submit a precept request for the 2022/23 financial year of £ 16,504.56, the value required to balance the 2022/23 budget.

10. Formalities

- (230) Council noted feedback received via Dick Thomas, Ockley Parish Council Chair, who had represented Mole Valley Parish Councils at the inaugural Annual Conference of the Surrey Development Forum held on 21st November 2021 had been circulated. Council **resolved** to record a vote of thanks to Cllr Thomas for attending and sharing the feedback and concluded no further action was required at this time.
- (231) Council noted Natural England had launched a Call for Public Evidence to inform its review of the boundaries of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a consultation due to close on 31st January 2022. As Council is mindful only principal authorities will have the status of statutory consultee when Natural England consults on its draft proposal, Council noted the Clerk will submit a request for Council to be kept appraised as the review progresses. **Action:** Clerk to issue a parish update to remind residents to submit any evidence they wish Natural England to consider.
- (232) Council received feedback from Cllr Bourke following his attendance at a NALC Virtual webinar entitled “Levelling up the environment through biodiversity”. The key speakers had set out the case for urgent action to support the diversity of our fauna and flora by highlighting the dramatic decline in bees and explaining the link to food production. **Action:** Cllrs Husband and Bourke to consider whether a 2022 Annual Parish Meeting might provide an opportunity to engage with local residents on this topic and report back in time for the March meeting.
- (233) Council noted the Surrey Police report for the period since 8th November 2021 had advised, six traffic related vehicle stops on the A25, three false alarm calls and single recordings of a vehicle collision with deer, neighbourhood dispute relating to CCTV, cloning of number plates, possession, concern for welfare and level crossing failure.
- (234) Council noted that updates issued by Natural England, NALC, Surrey ALC, SCC, MVDC, Surrey Police, Surrey Hills Society, GACC and Gatwick Airport Limited had been circulated to Cllrs and key information published within Parish Updates and on the village website.

11. Date of next Council Meeting

- (235) Council noted the next meeting of Buckland Parish Council is scheduled to be held in the Reading Room as an “in person” meeting on Monday 14th March 2022.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Sheena Boyce, Clerk

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