

**Minutes of Bucklesham Parish Council Meeting**

Held on 14th January 2021 ~ 7.00pm

Via Zoom Video Conference

Present

Cllr. Evelyn Bloomfield

Cllr. David Brinkley

Cllr. Gina Burgess

Cllr. Rhea Gardner

Cllr. Clive Lenton

Cllr. Heather Owen (Chair)

Cllr. Lynda Seagroatt (after item 15)

Cllr. Richard Kerry (ESC)

Judi Hallett (Interim Clerk)

4 members of the public were present

**1. To receive Apologies for absence:**

No apologies were received.

**2. To receive any Declarations of Interest and any Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items (either pecuniary or non-pecuniary):**

Cllr. Bloomfield declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 13.a.ii and item 13.b.i.

**3. Public Participation – To receive:**

a) Reports from County and District Councillors:

- Cllr. Patricia O'Brien ~ Cllr. O'Brien's report had been circulated previously.
- Cllr. Melissa Allen ~ ESC regular reports regarding Covid 19 and other information have been circulated weekly.
- Cllr. Richard Kerry ~ ESC report received and circulated prior to meeting.

Cllr. Kerry was asked if the COVID 19 vaccination programme looked to be on schedule and if he had any information regarding transportation to the vaccination sites for those members of the village without transport. Cllr Kerry informed the Council that he had discussed that very issue that afternoon and if residents were housebound or unable to attend the clinic for vaccination, arrangements would be made to visit them at home.

Cllr. Burgess asked about the ESC Grants that had been reported on in the East Anglian Daily Times today. Cllr Kerry stated that Parish Councils would be receiving these grants to help with the loss of income due to the Coronavirus. The Clerk reported she had been informed Bucklesham would receive £50.00.

Chair's initials: .....

b) Questions from any member of the public: ~

Ruth Johnson stated that she was making the following comment in her capacity as Treasurer of the Bucklesham and Foxhall Village Hall. During the last month, a serious leak had occurred in the committee room coming from the roof. A roofing expert had been called to repair the roof, which has been completed, but this was a temporary measure as the batons and felt in several places are rotten and it has been recommended that the hall requires a whole new roof. The most appropriate source of funding will be a Tarmac Grant as they will fund projects up to and in excess of £20,000.

It had previously been discussed that the Community Council would apply for a Tarmac Grant for renovations to the Playing Field, however the Village Hall roof is a far more pressing project, and it was felt that the Playing Field project could be put on hold for another year with little impact. With some specific grants, including a Tarmac Grant, a Third Party Funder will be required to fund 10% of the requested amount. This is to cover Landfill taxes. Ruth requested that in their capacity as Community Councillors, the Parish Council agree to be the Third Party Funder. The 10% could be found by applying for an Exemplar Grant from East Suffolk Council rather than using existing Parish Council funds. This would allow the Village Hall to apply for a Tarmac Grant. Cllr. Kerry agreed to support any application for the East Suffolk Council Exemplar Grant which was greatly appreciated by the whole Council.

Ruth expressed huge thanks for the support the Parish Council had shown in the past year. She explained that it had at times been very difficult to garner support from all authorities but that the Bucklesham Parish Council and the District and County Councillors had all been fantastic and had prevented the hall from having serious financial difficulties due to the Lockdown enforced by the Coronavirus pandemic.

**4. To agree Minutes of meeting dated 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020.**

All Councillors agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Cllr. Gardner proposed that the minutes should be signed, seconded by Cllr. Lenton, and all Councillors agreed.

The minutes had already been published on the website in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

**5. Clerks Report – To receive updates on matters not requiring debate or decision.**

The Clerk's report had been previously circulated to all Councillors, but four specific points were highlighted.

- i. The Clerk reported that although the new Dog Poo bin for the end of Levington Lane, passed number 92, had not yet been installed, Norse had marked the area with white spray paint and therefore installation was imminent.

- ii. An email was received from Highways this week informing the Clerk that our application to install the Speed Awareness Camera Poles was going through the last stages of checks and they will soon be in a position to formally order the works to go ahead.
- iii. The Clerk explained that she had received two emails from the football team managers expressing their sincere thanks for the decision to waive the fees for the second half of the season. Both had again asked if the decision to not invite them back again next year could be reconsidered but the Clerk informed them that this was not possible and sited the conveyance.
- iv. It was agreed that once the Lockdown was over Councillors would rearrange a suitable time for new signatories to meet at HSBC to show their ID with the new Bank Mandate forms.

Action: Clerk

**6. Reports - To receive reports from Mrs Ruth Johnson on:**

**a. Bucklesham Village Website Administration**

Ruth Johnson reported that she had again contacted the Lavender Farm and the Shannon Public House to ask for information to include on their pages of the Website but had no reply. Once Lockdown restrictions are lifted Ruth will visit them personally with a draft of the proposed wording and seek approval. She had also updated the 'News' and will endeavour to do this monthly in order to keep things current.

**b. New Year edition of Bucklesham Bugle**

The New Year 2021 edition had been distributed. Following confusion from some villagers, Ruth contacted David Wardle to enquire as to whether the St Mary Church 'Community Newsletter' could remove the word 'Community' as villagers had asked if it had replaced the Bugle. David completely understood the issue and the confusion and agreed any future copies should be called St Mary's Church Newsletter to be completely clear. Three more villagers have requested an online Bugle rather than a hard copy so Councillors will notice their distribution lists may have altered slightly. The Spring edition is in draft form.

**c. Friends of Playing Field**

Ruth explained that the trees in the Car Park have now been felled. The removal of the stumps will take place over the next few weeks. Goddard Fencing have been booked and the fence will be installed in the beginning of February. Ruth and Cllr. Lenton had lit the bonfire and this was all now cleared.

**d. Bucklesham Community Council**

Ruth reported that she has completed a Grant Application as the Community Council on behalf of the Village Hall from the 'Local Connections Fund' with the Dept of Culture. The Grant is for £2,500 to be spent on improvements to the fabric of the building that will improve Covid Security. She has also applied for a Grant from the 'Reviving our Community Fund' for £3,000. Both grants should be decided upon by end of January.

Chair's initials: .....

Finally, Ruth informed the Council that she had been contacted by Community Action Suffolk with a request to be a guest speaker at their annual East Of England Community Hubs and Village Halls Conference. Ruth had put together a presentation on behalf of the Village Hall informing others of best practice with grant applications and giving advice, hints and tips on how to cope with the loss of income due to the lockdown. She had then been contacted by Jayne Vaughn to ask if Lord Gardiner (on the Rural Affairs Cttee member) could mention Bucklesham's success in his Key Note speech in the House of Lords.

**7. To receive and ask questions of report from Cllr Gardner on Felixstowe Peninsula Partnership Meeting January 2021.**

Cllr Gardner had previously circulated her report containing two main points.

- i. The remaining £5,000 of the 2020/21 Budget has been allocated to Felixstowe Salvation Army and Langer Road Primary School. The former will receive £1,500 to allow the purchase of small digital items e.g. headphones, cables, batteries, DVD players and CD players which officers will then distribute. The Primary School will be assisted by at least £2,530 to hold a One Day Sports Activities event during the Christmas and February school holidays. Each invited child and a friend will be provided with a lunch and snacks. It is planned to use this as a safeguarding opportunity for the child and parent/carer. An external sports coach will be hired from 9am to 3pm.
- ii. There is a scheme to allocate 2000 boxes to elderly East Suffolk residents who live alone, or care for someone else in the household and were confined to the house "shielding" between March & July 2020. The contents of the box are themed - Keeping Active, Active Minds and Eating Well. Contents to include water bottle, hand warmer, recipe cards, food treats, information about key local contacts and services and hopefully freebies from Adnams, Munchy Seeds, East of England Co-op and other local businesses. Our CP has 200 to distribute this month. I have contacted four Bucklesham ladies for their help to identify any one in our village who is eligible and, thanks to the Church Lunch organiser, one name has been put forward.

The next meeting will be 18th February 2021 and Cllr Gardner said she would be happy to listen in.

**8. To discuss the process for advertising for new Clerk and agree timetable.**

The Clerk had previously circulated documentation drafted regarding the appointment of the new Clerk. SALC have a template Job Description that has been adapted and Councillors agreed there was an extensive list of requirements they consider necessary in the new Clerk. Along with all the usual administrative duties, they will be expected to undertake the editorship of the Bugle and the management of the Website as well as being capable of applying for Grants and managing the Budget as Responsible Finance Officer. The Clerk suggested a timetable for the process and an agreed task to allow the candidates to show their competence. It was decided that the poster would be placed on the Village Hall notice board immediately with a closing date for applicants of February 28<sup>th</sup> 2021. There would be an analysis of applications in March with a view to interview in April and appoint at the May meeting with a view to start on July 1st. The Clerk suggested that three Councillors, including the Chair, be a subcommittee and be on the interview panel and report back to the other Parish Councillors.

**Action: Clerk**

Chair's initials: .....

**9. To discuss the Quiet Lanes village consultation.**

The Clerk explained the process and where Bucklesham is with regards to the implementation of Quiet Lane status of the identified lanes in the village. Both the Clerk and Ruth Johnson had attended several Q and A training meetings and had initiated the process. It has been suggested that Bucklesham may not be granted Quiet Lane status for Tenth Road or Holly Lane as the Highways department survey has shown average speed of traffic along these lanes to be too high and therefore the lanes may not be suitable. As Holly Lane is on the outskirts of the village and rarely used, and Tenth Lane is completely straight it was felt that pursuing these two lanes was not necessary.

The Parish Council now has to complete the request for the number of signs necessary to identify the lanes and whether poles will also be needed or whether the signs can be attached to already existing poles. In her capacity as deputy Quiet Lanes lead Ruth Johnson has completed this. There are no suitable existing poles in Church Lane, so poles and signs will be needed for both ends. There is one suitable pole at the beginning of Levington Lane (past number 92) but not at the other end, therefore a sign and pole will be needed there. If the Parish Council proceed with the request for Church Lane and Levington Lane to gain Quiet Lane status, it will be necessary for 4 'Entry' and 4 'Exit' medium sized signs at a cost of £100 each to be ordered and 3 poles, the cost of which we are still awaiting confirmation of. Suffolk County Council will contribute £600 per project.

The next step is to hold a consultation event to inform the village. This would most likely have to be held via Zoom conferencing. It was agreed the Consultation would be on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April at 6pm. It will be advertised in the Spring Bugle and on village notice boards.

**Action: Clerk**

**10. To discuss HGV vehicle movement through the village from Valley Farm.**

The Clerk had been contacted by a village resident with regards to the considerable volume of HGVs coming from Valley Farm through the village. Following research on the ESC Planning Portal the Clerk reported that she could see there were 18 planning applications attributed to that site, the latest one was the application C/12/0898 in 2012 when Foskers Fruit and Veg moved to the site. Other companies have moved in but there have been no further applications. This may be because permission was not required, however this can be confirmed. Application C/12/0898 does have conditions attached that prevent working after 6.00pm and before 6.00am in order to 'protect the local environment'.

It is also noted that a 'routing plan' was required by ESC (then SCDC) and it would be helpful to see that. It was noted that Foskers vans are not the route of the problem but if they had conditions then these perhaps should also apply to other firms using the facilities. It was also noted that, back in 1995, R E Dennison and Sons (the then proprietor of the site) were REFUSED permission to increase the number of vehicles that operated from the location from 12 to 17. One of the reasons for refusal was that it would have a "significant increase in the number of HGV movements on an unsatisfactory road network". The District Council also stated that allowing the application would be contrary to their then Local Plan.

The current Local Plan section 4.34 is relevant to this situation:

*It is acknowledged that employment opportunities in the rural areas are generally only accessible via motor vehicle and public transport opportunities are limited. In such locations any development needs to be sensitive to the surrounding landscape and not have an unacceptable impact (such as high volumes of HGV traffic) on the local road network including routes to the main road network. However the benefit of retaining these types of sites for economic activity and the local employment opportunities they provide in the majority of cases is considered to outweigh the negatives that arise from location and access arrangements.*

The Parish Council felt there was a very strong case to write to both ESC (on a Planning front) and SCC (on a Highways front) to ask them a number of questions.

Cllr. Brinkley asked if the Council could request information with regards whether there is a routing order in place. This could also help in the future with regards to monitoring increased HGV movements through the village as a result of the Sizewell Holding Area in Levington.

The Villager who had contacted the Clerk with regards to this matter had been asked to consider composing a mini log of vehicle movements with the number of vehicles known to have come from the depot that went past their house. This could be a helpful statistic to put in the Parish Council letter, even if it will have to be backed up by an official SCC traffic count.

The Clerk suggested that as a matter of professional courtesy she would inform the Brightwell, Foxhall and Purdis Farm Group Parish Council of the Parish Council's communication with East Suffolk and Highways, as Valley Farm is in their Parish.

Action: Clerk

**11. To discuss communication with the village and the development of 'The Brief Bugle Bulletin' Parish Council email alert service.**

A discussion took place with regards to the best way to communicate important information to the village that could not wait for the next Bugle. Examples such as fallen trees blocking roads, roads flooded, missing cats etc. were given. The Clerk informed the Parish Council about the email alert service successfully in place in Tunstall which is called the Grapevine. An example email had previously been sent to Councillors. It was felt that this was a more appropriate and professional method of alerting the village of important information than other methods such as Facebook or Twitter. With both Social Media platforms, it was necessary to have the site constantly monitored and also difficult to disassociate the Parish Council from inappropriate comments and links to unwelcome personal opinions.

It was agreed that the Parish Council Clerk would set up this email alert system with the Parish Councillors as the first recipients. The FOPs would also be asked if they wanted to be included on the list, and Councillors would also ask any their own personal contacts who lived in the village if they wished to join. An article explaining the service would be included in the Spring Bugle. It would be a six month trial with a review at the July meeting.

Action: Clerk

**12. To discuss The Census 2021.**

A discussion took place about the National Census which takes place every ten years. Along with the rest of the county, Bucklesham residents will soon be asked to take part in the nationwide survey of housing and the population. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941. Information received by the Clerk detailed the procedure this time explaining that this would be a digital-first census which will help decide how services are planned and funded in our local area. All Households will receive a letter with a unique access code in the post, allowing them to complete their questionnaire online. It was hoped that Parish Councils would help to facilitate online completion by holding a special event in the Village Hall. However, due to Coronavirus lockdown restrictions, this will now not be possible. Therefore, paper questionnaires will be available on request.

**13. Planning:**

- a. To discuss and ratify response to the following Applications received:
  - i. Demolish and replace existing garage DC/19/2118/FUL Kembroke Cottage, Kirton Road, IP10 0BT  
Councillors made the following comments:
    - No Objection
    - Conclusion: **No Objection** – sent to ECS directly.
  - ii. Barn Conversion DC/19/0471/PN3 The Barn Tenth Road, Bucklesham IP10 0BP  
Councillors made the following comments:
    - No Objection
    - Conclusion: **No Objection** – sent to ESC directly.
  - iii. Detached store/workshop DC/20/4940/FUL The Brooke, St Mary’s Park IP10 0DR
    - No Objection: **No Objection** – sent to ESC directly.

It was proposed by Cllr. Gardner that the decision to send a comment of ‘No Objection’ for all three was ratified. This was seconded by Cllr. Lenton with 5 in favour and 1 abstention.

- b. To discuss the following Planning Applications received:
  - i. New Park Home DC/20/5100/FUL Red House Farm, Tenth Road, IP10 0BP  
Councillors made the following comments:
    - No Objection: No Objection will be sent to ESC directly.

A comment of No Objection was proposed by Cllr. Burgess and seconded by Cllr. Brinkley. Cllr. Bloomfield abstained with 5 in favour.

**Action: Clerk**

**14. Finance Matters:**

- a. To accept accounts up until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and review of Bank Statements.

The accounts had been sent to all Councillors and there were no questions. The Clerk agreed to take the statements to a Councillor for verification.

**Action: Clerk**

b. To review our Internal Accounting Procedures and the suitability of our Internal Auditor.

The Clerk had previously sent an email which explained that one of the annual tasks the Parish Council needs to complete is a review of our Internal Controls for dealing with financial matters and the efficiency of our Internal Audit.

**Financial Controls**

We have the following financial controls in place:

- Clerk checks invoice against estimate (where appropriate) and queries any differences
- Clerk draws cheque
- Two signatories see invoice and reconcile with cheque (then sign cheque, cheque stub and initial invoice)
- Bank reconciliation is produced at the end of every month and sent to Councillors
- A Councillor reviews the Bank Statements at each meeting (i.e. at least 6 times a year)
- Financial Regulations are in place and reviewed annually

**Efficiency of Internal Audit**

The Clerk recommended that the internal auditor we use (Mr Trevor Brown) is efficient and competent for the following reasons:

- He is a retired Clerk and is fully aware of the Parish Council accounting processes
- He is used by Heelis and Lodge, a local known and respected audit firm
- He was used by SALC to carry out their audits until he retired from this role two years ago
- He produces a list of documents and items he requires to complete the audit
- He monitors our Website monthly to check tasks have been completed (and alerts the Clerk if he can see a task not completed)
- He produces a written report for the audit and makes recommendations clear to the Council (see latest copy on our web site)

**Appointment of Internal Auditor** ~ It was proposed by Cllr. Owen and seconded by Cllr. Burgess that all procedures in place were adequate and that the Council continue to use the excellent services of Trevor Brown. All were in favour.

In line with this, the Clerk informed the Council that she had produced a Year End Preparation Checklist for the audit. This had been circulated previously by email. It will be filled in throughout the year (by the Clerk) as and when we action various points. It helps to avoid having several items on the agenda all at once if we spread the necessary task throughout the year and have a few at each meeting.

c. To discuss request for funding from Ipswich BMX Club.

A discussion took place as to the request for funds. It was agreed that in line with the Grants Policy and as there did not appear to be many Bucklesham Children who would benefit from this, it was not a good use of Parish Council Funds and therefore no grant would be given. The Clerk was asked to write to the project explaining the decision but wishing them good luck with their endeavours.

**Action: Clerk**

Chair's initials: .....



d. To ratify decision not to invoice football teams for second half of fees.

As a gesture of good will and to support grass roots football in these difficult times, the Clerk had written to the football teams, following email consultation with all Councillors, explaining that as they had been unable to continue with the season and therefore not used the pitch, the Parish Council would not be charging them for the second half of the hire of the field. Ratification of the decision was proposed by Cllr. Burgess and seconded by Cllr. Gardner and all were in favour.

e. To discuss and agree Budget for 2021-22

The budget had been sent out previously and lengthy discussion took place. Cllr. Brinkley stated that he felt the planned expenditure was neither too generous or too cautious and that the Budget was very well laid out and explained. Cllr. Burgess asked if the allocation for Play Equipment repairs was enough. The Clerk stated that there was £2,500.00 in reserves for the Play Equipment and that the minor repairs and cleaning suggested in the RoSPA would be carried out as part of the ongoing maintenance. Cllr. Brinkley proposed the Budget be agreed, this was seconded by Cllr. Burgess and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

f. To discuss and agree precept request for 2021-22

It was agreed that this year in particular the Parish Council would manage the finances to ensure a 0% increase for the village in recognition of the financial hardships many are facing. It was proposed by Cllr. Bloomfield that a figure of £8993.00 be requested from East Suffolk Council for the precept and seconded by Cllr. Gardner. All were in favour.

Action: Clerk

g. To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:

i. suffolk.cloud (web hosting) £110.00

The above payment was proposed by Cllr. Burgess, seconded by Cllr. Bloomfield and all Councillors agreed they be paid. The Clerk agreed to take the cheques to Cllrs for signing.

Action: Clerk

h. To note Payments made since last meeting:

i. Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	£50.00
ii. Suffolk Accident Rescue Service	£50.00
iii. Disability Advice Service	£50.00
iv. Print 4 U (New Year Bugle)	£148.00
v. J Hallett (Clerk's Salary Oct, Nov, Dec)	£600.00
vi. HMRC (Clerk's PAYE)	£150.00

i. To note Payments received since last meeting:

i. None

Chair's initials: .....

j. To note Bank Balances as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020:

i. Current Account (No. 80152285)	£6,308.80
ii. Savings Account (No. 00605875)	£16,529.90

**15. To co-opt Parish Councillor and signing of ‘Declaration of acceptance of Office’.**

Mrs Lynda Seagroatt had come forward to stand as Parish Councillor following the advert in the New Year Bugle. Mrs Seagroatt had previously informed the Parish Council that she had lived in the village for six years and would like to take more of an active role in village life. The Clerk had contacted Mrs Seagroatt before the meeting and explained the role of the Parish Council and what could be expected. Mrs Seagroatt was thanked for her offer to stand as Parish Councillor by Cllr. Owen who proposed she be co-opted on to the Council. This was seconded by Cllr. Bloomfield and all were in favour. The Clerk agreed to contact Mrs Seagroatt in the next few days to complete the necessary paperwork.

**Action: Clerk**

**16. To receive agenda items for next meeting on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

There were no new agenda items as at the meeting from the Councillors, but the Clerk reminded them that all projects going forward would be included and that any new items should be notified to her by at least one week before the meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

Cllr. Burgess asked the Clerk if the Parish Council were going to continue with Zoom conferencing meetings after May, or if we were required to return to face to face meetings in the Village Hall. The Clerk said there were ongoing discussions with the authorities and she was watching the situation carefully. She expressed an opinion that it would likely be made permissible for virtual meetings to continue into the future, as many people had found it extremely useful. There was a suggestion that perhaps there could be ‘hybrid’ meetings with some Councillors in the hall and others who were unable to join in person dialling in via Zoom conferencing or a similar method.

Cllr. Brinkley asked if there was an item on the agenda for Any Other Business. The Clerk explained that this is no longer considered Best Practice and is discouraged by SALC. Any items to be discussed need to be on the agenda in advance to allow Councillors to consider their response. This of course could always allow for emergency discussions. Cllr. Brinkley thanked the Clerk and said he understood the reason and that he had no items to discuss.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Signed: .....  
Chair

Date: .....

*Judi Hallett*  
Interim Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council

Chair’s initials: .....