

Minutes of Bucklesham Parish Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 7:00pm
In Bucklesham and Foxhall Village Hall, IP10 0DZ

Present

Cllr David Brinkley (Chair)
Cllr Gemma Marriage

Cllr Rhea Gardner
Cllr Kathryn Roper

Cllr Clive Lenton
Cllr Lynda Seagroatt

Cllr Mike Ninnmey (ESC)

Cllr Lee Reeves (ESC) (joined meeting at 8:30pm)

Ruth Johnson (Clerk)

2 members of the public were present

1. Apologies for absence:

a. To receive apologies for absence.

The Clerk had received apologies from Cllr Bickers (illness).

b. To accept apologies for absence.

Cllr Brinkley proposed that Cllr Bickers apologies be accepted, seconded by Cllr Roper with all in favour.

2. To receive any:

a. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest.

There were none.

b. Declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest.

Cllr Roper declared an interest in item 9.a. as her daughter had requested the item of play equipment to be discussed.

c. Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items.

There were none.

d. Declarations of Gifts or Hospitality received over the value of £50.00

There were none.

e. Notification of Lobbying with reference to Planning Applications to be discussed.

There were none.

3. Public Participation – To receive:

a. Reports from County and District Councillors:

• Suffolk County Cllr Patti Mulcahy:

Apologies for non-attendance had been received two hours before the meeting but no report had been received from Cllr Mulcahy. As requested by the Chair at the November meeting, the Clerk had written to Cllr Mulcahy expressing the Council's dissatisfaction at the lack of engagement with Bucklesham parishioners, and asking what more the Council could do to encourage her attendance and commitment to her role. No reply had been received.

The Clerk had once again copied Cllr Mulcahy into numerous emails with regards to Highways issues but had received no response to any of them. The Clerk had also requested a contribution from Cllr Mulcahy's Locality Budget for the Roundabout Project on three separate occasions, but had again received no reply to the three emails sent.

The apology from Cllr Mulcahy explained that she had been unwell and requested that Parish Councils send her a list of their priorities with regards to emails she may have missed. The Clerk had replied sending thanks for the email, kind regards for a speedy recovery, and a request that priority is given to the Speed Limit campaign on Brightwell Road and the request for funding for the Roundabout Project. The full discussion with regards to Cllr Mulcahy's lack of engagement was saved for agenda item 15.

- East Suffolk District Cllr Mike Ninnmey and Cllr Lee Reeves:

Cllr Reeves had given his apologies for his absence due to attending Nacton Parish Council's meeting, however he joined the meeting at 8:30pm after Nacton's meeting had finished. The Chair welcomed Cllr Ninnmey and thanked him for all he had done for Bucklesham residents in the short time since the elections.

Regular monthly reports had been received and circulated to all Councillors, and Cllr Ninnmey was thanked for these by the Chair. Many local issues were highlighted including the Pitstop Outreach Project, which plans to provide a visiting food bank, clothing/toy bank, and advice to residents across the peninsula. Details were also given on the ESC's Warm Welcomes scheme with more than 20 hubs across the local area proving warm friendly spaces for those in need.

Cllr Ninnmey was thanked for supporting the Roundabout project with a grant of £1,500 from his Enabling Communities Budget, which along with Cllr Reeves's £1,500 was a very significant contribution.

The Chair also thanked Cllr Ninnmey and asked for thanks to be recorded to Cllr Reeves for their support of the Parish Council's campaign to reduce the speed limit on the C375 Brightwell Road. Both Councillors had written in support of the campaign, which the Chair felt could only add weight to the argument.

Cllr Reeves had attended the East Suffolk Council's Planning Referral Panel, which had discussed the retrospective planning application for the fence at 10 Levington Lane. Cllr Reeves had requested that the application be referred to the Planning South Committee for a decision. This would allow the Parish Council to make representation as to why there was so much local opposition to the application.

Action: Clerk

- b. Questions from any member of the public:

- There were none.

Chair's initials:

4. To agree Minutes of meeting dated 1st November 2023:

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

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

Action: Clerk

5. Clerk's Report – To receive updates on matters not requiring debate or decision.

The Clerk had continued to inform the Councillors of ongoing issues via a weekly email. Much of the work that the Clerk had been involved with was on the agenda, however some specific points were highlighted:

- i. The Clerk had attended two further training sessions with Parkinson Partnership LLP. The first was regarding Financial Internal Controls and Risk Management, and the second was regarding Procurement. Both had been extremely useful and informative. The Clerk and Cllr Marriage had both attended training on Allotment Management.
- ii. Along with some hardy volunteers, the Clerk had planted the 1,000 daffodil bulbs, collected from ESC, in various places around the village that are visible to all passers by. Cllr Marriage had also planted bulbs with the Year 6 children from Bucklesham Primary School all along the path from Potash cottage to the school.
- iii. The Monkey Climbing wall had been installed on the Playing Field. This had been fully funded by the Awards for All grant and although the Council had paid the VAT due, this would be reclaimed in February.
- iv. A resident had contacted the Council to request action is taken with regards to dangerous parking by parents at Bucklesham Primary School. The Clerk had explained the lengths taken to try to solve this perpetual problem but that unfortunately parking was not within the jurisdiction of the Council.
- v. The Clerk had continued to report the frequent flooding at the end of Levington Lane but a visiting Highways engineer had informed her that it was not a priority.
- vi. The Clerk had finally been successful in requesting Highways remove the dangerously hanging branch from the large oak tree in Levington Lane outside number 34. A meeting had been arranged with a representative from Flagship Housing, who are responsible for the tree, and concerned residents. This will take place on Saturday 13th January 2023 at 9:30am to allow the future maintenance of the tree to be discussed.
- vii. Communication had been received from SALC with regards to numerous events planned for the D-Day Celebrations on 6th June 2024. This had all been passed to the new administration of the Community Council in the hope that they would be willing to organise a village event.

Chair's initials:

viii. The Village Hall Committee had thanked the Council very much for agreeing to pay for the refurbishment of the Village Hall with Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funds. Councillors agreed the Hall was looking very smart.

6. To receive report from Cllrs Bickers and Roper on the SALC Conference on 29th November 2023.

Cllr Bickers and Cllr Roper had attended the SALC Conference on behalf of the Parish Council on 29th November. The conference was hosted by Sally Longmate, CEO of SALC, with a keynote speaker, Peter Aldous, Member of Parliament for the Constituency of Waveney.

Cllr Bickers attended ‘Pop-Up’ sessions including that by Tom Newcombe of Birketts Solicitors, who spoke broadly on planning issues affecting the Suffolk area, including the White Paper details which are changing in December 2023.

Cllr Bickers also attended an investment funding session, in which Jamie Charters of CCLA Investment Managers set out how his company invested funds on behalf of Councils and Parish Councils using A-credit rating banks and building societies as secure investment vehicles. He illustrated what appeared to be some attractive interest rates and Cllr Bickers suggested this was put on the agenda for discussion.

Cllr Roper attended a session on Unveiling the Power of AI - leveraging Chat GPT for Parish and Town Councils by John Fagan from Scribe. This was a short but powerful session demonstrating how AI systems, particularly the popular and free to use Chat GPT, could be used to support the work of Town and Parish Councils. From quickly summarising minutes, responding to queries from parishioners, and writing succinct social media posts, Chat GPT was reported to be a potential time and money saving tool which all Councils should be exploring.

Both Councillors attended the final plenary session which focussed on Suffolk Highways issues. Questions were based on four main topics:

- Pothole repairs
- Flooding and drainage
- Overgrown verges and hedges
- Communication including the Highways Reporting Tool.

The new Highways contractors had been appointed and delegates were assured that in future the response time for carrying out all matters relating to the issues above will be reduced considerably. Delegates were encouraged to join the Community Self-Help Organisation as a means of getting work completed in a shorter time period. There was no opportunity for the delegates to ask further questions on this.

The Chair thanked Cllrs Bickers and Roper for taking a day out of their busy lives to attend this conference on behalf of the village and for representing the Parish Council so well.

7. To receive report from Cllr Gardner on Felixstowe Peninsular Community Partnership (FPCP) meeting of 4th December 2023.

On Monday 4th December 2023, Twenty-two members of the FPCP met in Felixstowe Library. The main objective was to brainstorm how to best use the £10,000 allocated to address cost of living issues. There was not any surplus from this pot to utilise in Bucklesham on this occasion.

Chair’s initials:

The Active Adult Project, aimed at anyone over 45 years old, were investigating Curling and Seat Dancing. The Active Youth Project are to run a scheme involving the eleven Primary Schools within the Partnership.

Five pupils from each school will be given free swimming lessons for three months. If one school declines, their five slots will be offered to other schools. Bucklesham Primary will be sent an invitation.

To assist teenagers with hiring a dress for their school prom, or hire a suit for an interview, Level 2 have opened a project which will run until February 2024, or longer if funding allows. The Health Fair in March 2024 will be having guest speakers and hopefully will have cookery demonstrations. Considerable time was taken discussing how to assist rough sleepers and people who cannot afford mobile phones, iPads or other modern means of receiving information and help.

The Chair thanked Cllr Gardner for her attendance and for representing Bucklesham so well as always.

8. To discuss the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of the Bucklesham Allotments from East Suffolk Council (ESC).

Solicitor Sam Read, of Barker Gotelee, who had been asked to act on behalf of the Parish Council, reported that the CAT was progressing well. Cllrs Brinkley and Lenton, as Chair and Vice Chair, had attended the offices of Barker Gotelee with requested ID for legal purposes of the transfer.

The Chair's previous concern over the planning application involving a newly built bungalow in Levington Lane (with proposed access onto the allotments) had been alleviated as the application had been withdrawn. The Clerk expected the CAT to be completed within the next few weeks.

9. Playing Field:

a. To discuss the Roundabout Project

The Clerk had sought a more competitive quote from Playquip Ltd, a company who had been recommended by Framlingham Parish Council. The total cost of the equipment and installation would be £10,756, which was £2,000 less than the quote from NGF Play who had previously been the most competitive.

The Clerk reported that the Council had been successful in the request to the Mrs L D Rope Third Charitable Trust Fund for a grant for the roundabout and had received £1,000. The village children who had requested the roundabout had raised £51.50 themselves with a stall at the Community Council's Craft Fayre in November. A further £3,000 had been awarded by District Cllrs Reeve and Ninnmey from their Enabling Communities Budget. The Clerk had also managed to secure a further £2,000 from the Lovewell Blake Fund. This left a shortfall of £4,704.50.

Councillors commented that it was very disappointing that Cllr Mulcahy had not replied to requests for a contribution from her Locality Budget, which is specifically given to County Councillors for such village projects. Cllr Brinkley proposed that the Council go ahead with ordering the Roundabout and that the remaining amount is taken from CIL funds. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner.

Chair's initials:

Cllr Roper abstained due to her daughter being one of the children who had requested the equipment. The remainder of the Council voted in favour.

Cllr Brinkley stated that he felt it was very important to have listened to the request from the children who had asked for the equipment and that he was very pleased that the Council was able to see the project through to a successful outcome.

10. Documentation:

- i. To discuss and approve the updated Asset Register as sent to Councillors on 5th January 2024.

The Clerk reminded the Council that the Asset Register needed to be reviewed and adopted each time a new asset is included. The new Monkey Challenge Climbing Wall had been added and all Councillors confirmed they had reviewed the Asset Register. Cllr Lenton proposed the Asset Register be adopted, seconded by Cllr Roper and all were in favour.

11. Highways:

- a. To discuss Highways' proposal for the reduction of speed limit on the Brightwell road to 40mph (see Appendix C)

The Clerk had been contacted by a Suffolk Highways Traffic Regulation Officer requesting the Parish Council's comments on their Speed Limit Report, which proposed to reduce the speed limit on the Brightwell Road to 40mph as it passes the school. The Parish Council had been campaigning to reduce the speed limit on this road for many years, but had been requesting the reduction to 30mph for the stretch of road including the school and all the houses on Bucklesham Heath.

Rather than just add limited comments, the Clerk had drafted a lengthy report for Councillors to reply to Highways and hopefully add the necessary weight required to the campaign. The Clerk was thanked for the very comprehensive report and the Chair acknowledged the considerable time spent on this issue. After discussion, further minor additions to the report were suggested by Councillors.

Councillors commented that it was extremely disappointing that one resident of the village had initiated a petition *against* the reduction in speed limit, as he felt that it was more important that drivers were not inconvenienced. This resident had requested that the Council include his objections in the report to highways. The Council agreed that including negative comments to the campaign was counter-productive, particularly in view of the immense effort involved in compiling the report and campaigning to reduce the speed limit. The resident in question had been advised by the Clerk to contact Highways directly if he wished to object.

- b. To discuss the suggestion from Highways that Bucklesham join the Self-Help Scheme to tackle minor Highways maintenance with resident volunteers (See Appendix A).

The Clerk had compiled a report for Councillors to aid them with their discussion and the Chair thanked the Clerk for all her hard work on this. Councillors made the following comments:

- This would be a very costly scheme if all volunteers had to receive training
- If something went wrong (a volunteer made a mistake) who would be liable?
- The principle is a good idea, but it's not workable in practice
- Is this our responsibility or is this what we already pay our Council Tax for?
- There would be a huge cost of training and PPE
- We would not get the amount of volunteers necessary given previous requests for help

Cllr Marriage proposed that the Council reject the proposal of joining the Self-Help Scheme. This was seconded by Cllr Brinkley and all were in favour.

12. Planning:

- a. To discuss and consider the development of a Neighbourhood Plan (See Appendix B).

East Suffolk Council had organised an event on 23rd November 2023, offering Parish Councils help and advice on developing a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) which had been attended by Cllr Gardner.

The Clerk had compiled a report for the Council to give background information and details of the implications of implementing an NP, and to aid their discussion. The Clerk was thanked once again for her efforts.

As East Suffolk Council request that NPs are not lead by the Parish Council but are instead initiated by residents, Cllr Brinkley suggested that the Council consult residents via the next Bucklesham Bugle newsletter in order to ascertain the interest in the village and whether anyone would be interested in joining a Neighbourhood Plan Committee.

Cllr Marriage proposed that this was deferred until all the new homes in the Castlemore Homes development in Oak Tree View were occupied, as there may be new residents of the village who wished to join in. This was seconded by Cllr Roper and all Councillors agreed.

Action: Clerk

- b. To discuss the permission granted for the Bucklesham Solar Farm and the Community Benefit Fund.

Following the successful planning application for the Solar Farm, the Council had been contacted by Novus to talk through the details of the Community Benefit Fund (CBF). This annual monetary benefit will be paid to the Council for use within the village for the benefit of residents. Novus indicated that once the Judicial Review Period had ended on 7th January 2024 they would require the Council to sign an agreement with regards to the CBF.

The Clerk had sought advice from East Suffolk Council Planning Department with regards to the CBF but had yet to receive a reply. Cllr Bickers had informed the Clerk before the meeting that he would be prepared to lead on this, had offered his professional knowledge and experience of such matters and agreed to consult his contacts in the industry for some advice.

Action: Clerk

13. Finance Matters:

- a. To review accounts as at 31st December 2023 and review Bank Statements.

The accounts for 31st December 2023 had been sent to all councillors and there were no questions. The Clerk asked Cllr Seagroatt to sign the Bank Statements.

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

The Clerk had previously sent an email reminding Councillors 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 known and respected local audit firm
- He was used by SALC to carry out their audits until he retired from this role four years ago
- He produces a list of documents and items he requires to complete the audit
- He monitors our website regularly 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 website)

Appointment of Internal Auditor

Cllr Roper recognised the excellent services of Mr Brown, but questioned the practice of using the same auditor for many years and suggested it may be beneficial to alternate between other auditors in future. The Clerk was asked to research which other auditors are used by local Councils with a possibility of changing auditor next year. Cllr Brinkley agreed that this was a good idea, and he proposed that all procedures in place were adequate and that the Council continue to use the excellent services of Mr Brown this year. This was seconded by Cllr Lenton and all were in favour.

In line with this, the Clerk informed the Council that she had once again been using the Year End Preparation Checklist, in preparation for the audit. This had been circulated previously by email. It had proved very useful as it had helped to avoid having several items on the agenda all at once as the Council had spread the necessary tasks throughout the year and had a few at each meeting.

- c. To receive the Internal Control Statement for year ending 2022/23.

This document had been previously sent to all Councillors. Cllr Gardner proposed the Internal Control Statement be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Brinkley and all were in favour.

- d. To discuss and agree quote from East Suffolk Services of £770.88 for grass cutting in 2024.

The Clerk had once again compiled a list of cuts of the field during the year to ensure the Council had not been overcharged. Cllr Brinkley proposed that this year's quote of £770.88 for 8 cuts, which included £200 for the additional cuts of the Allotments, be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Marriage. All were in favour.

e. To discuss and agree the Budget 2024/25.

The budget had been sent out previously and the Council debated at length the various funds allocated. Cllr Brinkley stated that he felt the planned expenditure was very cautious and that although the Budget was very well laid out and explained, there was very little room for unexpected expenditure. Cllr Brinkley suggested that the amount allocated for 'Admin' be increased as the Council had overspent in previous years from the budgeted amount. The Clerk had amended this to reflect the need. Cllr Brinkley proposed the Budget be agreed, this was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all were in favour.

f. To discuss and agree the precept for 2024/25.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the necessity for a rise in the precept to cover the increased costs to the Council Budget this year. It was agreed that although the Parish Council manage the finances very well, and the Council were extremely mindful of the continued financial hardships that many were facing, it would be necessary to request an increase in the precept. This would likely mean an average increase of 13p per household per week. It was proposed by Cllr Brinkley that a figure of £11,720.00 be requested from East Suffolk Council for the precept. This was seconded by Cllr Lenton with all in favour.

g. To discuss investment opportunities with CCLA Investment Funders.

As Cllr Bickers had asked for this to be included on the agenda following information he received on the scheme at the SALC Conference, the Clerk was asked to put this on the agenda for the March meeting.

h. To discuss the request for a donation from Headway Suffolk

A request had been received asking for a donation to support the work of this charity. Cllr Brinkley proposed that as the budget was unfortunately so tight it would not be an appropriate use of limited funds, and that any resident who wished to make a private donation to support this excellent charity could do so themselves. This was seconded by Cllr Roper and all were in agreement.

i. To authorise the following invoices for payment:

- i. Suffolk.cloud (web hosting) £120.00

j. To note payments made since last meeting:

i. SALC (Finance Training)	£78.00
ii. SALC (Allotments training for Clerk)	£120.00
iii. Royal British Legion (Poppy Appeal)	£50.00
iv. Bucklesham Village Hall (Hall hire for 2023)	£300.00
v. SALC (Allotments Training for Cllr Marriage)	£84.00
vi. Signs 4 U (Village plaque)	£134.08
vii. SALC (Conference admission)	£18.00
viii. Cllr Gardner (expenses)	£23.40
ix. R Johnson (Clerk's salary and expenses Oct Nov Dec + backpay)	£1,428.26
x. Finding Fitness (Monkey Wall on Playing Field)	£7,860.00
xi. HMRC Cumbernauld (Clerk's PAYE)	£329.20
xii. J Woods Electrical (Village Hall Maintenance)	£156.00
xiii. D&D Adams Painters (Village Hall Maintenance)	£2,000.00
xiv. Print 4 U (New Year Bugles)	£148.00
xv. East Suffolk Services (Grass cutting)	£401.11

k. To note payments received since last meeting:

i. A Young + 2 others (Fundraising for Roundabout project)	£51.50
ii. Mrs L D Rope Foundation (for Roundabout project)	£1,000.00
iii. ESC Enabling Communities Budget (from Cllrs Ninnmey and Reeves)	£3,000.00
iv. Awards For All (for Monkey Wall)	£6,550.00

l. To note Bank Balances as at 31st December 2023:

i. Current Account	£14,049.98
ii. Savings Account	£18,278.15

Cllr Brinkley proposed that finance matters *i* to *j* were accepted, seconded by Cllr Roper, with all in favour.

Action: Clerk

14. To review Council procedures with regard to consulting residents of the village on all Council matters.

This agenda item had been requested by Cllr Roper following disappointing adverse comments with regards to the way in which the Council had canvassed the residents of the village about the 20's Plenty For Suffolk Campaign. In order for the Council to learn lessons, a review of the procedures of the Council's consultation methods was suggested.

The Chair reminded the Council that an online survey had been organised to allow residents to have their say, and that the campaign (with a link to that survey) had been given a double page spread in the Autumn edition of the Bugle, which had been delivered to every house in the village in the last week of September 2023. Details of the campaign and survey had also been sent out on a Bugle Bulletin Email Alert on 19th September 2023 to 149 email addresses within the village, along with the link to the survey.

Chair's initials:

As well as the survey, residents were given the opportunity to contact the Clerk with their opinions either in person, by text, by email, or by telephone. The campaign had been discussed at three Parish Council meetings, with the agendas and minutes published on the village website, and a link to those documents was also sent out on Bugle Bulletins. The results of the survey had subsequently been disclosed in the New Year edition of the Bugle.

A resident of the village had posted on social media that the campaign had not been well advertised by the Council. The Clerk informed the Council that many of those residents agreeing with this statement on social media, including the complainant, had in fact received the Bugle, the Bugle Bulletin email alert, and records showed that they had actually clicked on the link to the survey. The complaint was also that the results in the Bugle were misleading as only 31 residents had commented on the campaign, which was a very low turnout. The Clerk accepted that the results in the Bugle did not include the detail that only 31 residents had commented on the campaign, however full details of the turnout had been minuted and published on the website.

The complainant had previously asked if the Council had advertised the 20's Plenty Campaign in the village notice board. The Clerk confirmed that they had not. Councillors felt that if residents did not read a newsletter that was delivered to their door, they were very unlikely to read the village notice board. The Clerk informed the Council that she had conducted an experiment to see how many residents read the notice board following this complaint. A small notice had been placed in the village notice board for three weeks before Christmas, offering a reward to anyone who informed the Council that they had read the notice. No one had contacted the Council, which lead the Clerk to believe that not a single resident had read the notice board in that time.

There had also been a suggestion that the Council should set up a Facebook page to inform residents via social media. The Suffolk Association of Local Councils had previously advised the Council against this, as Councils who had done this later took the pages down following an onslaught of abuse. Woodbridge Town Council had found it impossible to repeatedly correct the misinformation that residents posted and had found the task to be extremely time-consuming and counter-productive.

Cllr Brinkley stated that he honestly felt the Council had done more than enough to inform residents, and the fact that many people felt apathetic towards the 20's Plenty Campaign was not the responsibility of the Council.

A lengthy discussion took place with regards to what more the Council could do to engage the views of the village. It was widely accepted that Bucklesham Parish Council do far more than many other local Councils with regards to sharing information with residents, and this was confirmed by District Councillors Reeves and Ninnmey.

Councillors all agreed to revisit this subject in the future and to continue to look for ways in which to improve communication with the village.

15. To discuss the continued lack of engagement from Cllr Patti Mulcahy.

This agenda item had been requested by Cllr Bickers at the previous meeting if the situation with Cllr Mulcahy had not improved. As well as the Council’s continued disappointment with Cllr Mulcahy’s non-involvement, a resident of the village had contacted the Council to express his frustration with Cllr Mulcahy’s obvious lack of interest in village matters, and requested that the Council hold a Vote of No Confidence in Cllr Mulcahy. The resident had suggested that all Parish Councils in Cllr Mulcahy’s ward be contacted and asked to join together to remove her from office. The Clerk explained that she had written to all of those Councils asking for their support of an official complaint, but that no other Council had been willing to comment.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that although Bucklesham Parish Council meetings had been very well attended by the previous County Councillor, and by our District Councillors, attendance at Parish Council meetings was not compulsory. An official complaint would need to be aligned to the Code of Conduct, and a lack of engagement, apathy, and non-attendance at meetings was difficult to align to those principles in the code.

As Cllr Mulcahy had informed the Council that she had been unwell, Cllr Brinkley proposed that no further action be taken for the time being, and that this be revisited in March’s meeting to allow Cllr Mulcahy an opportunity to fulfil her promise of re-engaging with her duties. This was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt, with five Councillors in favour and one vote against (the one vote against was in regards to delaying the complaint, not for the complaint itself).

16. To receive agenda items for next meeting (Wednesday 13th March 2024).

Continuing discussions for allocating the CIL money to various projects would be included in the next agenda, along with the progress of the CAT of the Bucklesham Allotments.

There were no other 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 at least one week before the meeting.

Action: Clerk

The meeting closed at 9:05pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date:

Ruth Johnson
Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council

Chair’s initials: