

**Minutes of Bucklesham Parish Council Meeting**  
Held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7:00pm  
In Bucklesham and Foxhall Village Hall, IP10 0DZ

Present

Cllr Trevor Bickers  
Cllr Clive Lenton

Cllr David Brinkley (Chair)  
Cllr Gemma Marriage

Cllr Rhea Gardner  
Cllr Kathryn Roper

Cllr Lee Reeves (ESC)

Cllr Patti Mulcahy (SCC)

Ruth Johnson (Clerk)

4 members of the public were present

**1. Apologies for absence:**

**a. To receive apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Cllr Seagroatt (holiday).

**b. To accept apologies for absence.**

Cllr Brinkley proposed that Cllr Seagroatt's apologies were accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Roper and all were in favour.

**2. To receive any:**

**a. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest.**

There were none.

**b. Declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest.**

There were none.

**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:

The Chair thanked Cllr Mulcahy for her attendance. A report had been received and circulated by the Clerk prior to the meeting.

The Chair asked Cllr Mulcahy if she had any information regarding a request made by the Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023, with regards to the Community Benefit Fund Agreement from Bucklesham Solar. Cllr Mulcahy had promised to look into this further on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024, but no further reply had been received. Cllr Mulcahy said she had been unable to progress further with her enquiries.

The Chair asked Cllr Mulcahy if she had any opinion on the planning application DC/24/0449/FUL at Foxburrow Farm, Brightwell, as this could have serious implications for Bucklesham. Cllr Mulcahy replied that this was not something she was aware of.

The Chair asked Cllr Mulcahy if she would reconsider her decision not to contribute to the village's D-Day celebrations from her Locality Budget. Cllr Mulcahy stated that the Locality Budget could not be used for such events.

Cllr Mulcahy stated that the decision on the reduction of speed limit on the C375 was imminent, but warned Councillors that if it was successful, the cost of the improvements would be payable by the Parish Council, although she had been saving her Highways Budget to contribute to this.

East Suffolk District Cllr Mike Ninnmey and Cllr Lee Reeves:

Monthly reports had been sent by Cllrs Ninnmey and Reeves and these had been circulated. The Council had been informed that Cllr Ninnmey was recovering from a serious operation and would be unavailable until mid March. The Clerk had passed on the Council's best wishes for a speedy recovery.

The Chair thanked Cllr Reeves for both Councillors' generous donations of £500 each from their Enabling Communities Budgets to the village's D-Day celebrations. This money would be passed on to the Community Council to spend on many planned events commemorating the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D-Day landings in June.

Cllr Reeves commented that fly tipping had been an ongoing issue locally but luckily Bucklesham was not too badly affected.

**Action: Clerk**

**b. Questions from any member of the public:**

A member of the public asked if the Council was aware of a second planning application for the solar farm, which would involve the details of connection to the grid. The Clerk confirmed the Council had received no notification of a further planning application at present.

**4. To agree Minutes of meeting dated 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024:**

All Councillors agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Cllr Marriage proposed that the minutes should be signed, this was seconded by Cllr Bickers 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 Annual Spring Clean of the Village will take place on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024. This will be advertised in the Spring Bugle to request volunteers. Those willing to help will be offered 'grabbers' and supplied with bin bags, but should wear a Hi-Viz if possible and wear gloves.
- ii. The Clerk had been contacted by Michael Hadwen, Constituency Assistant to Therese Coffey MP, requesting she receive future copies of the Bucklesham Bugle. Mr Hadwen explained that Dr Coffey felt Bucklesham was the '*jewel in Suffolk Coastal's Crown*' and wished to be kept informed of news across the area and look for events that she may be able to take part in. The Clerk invited Dr Coffey to the Annual Litter Pick on 6<sup>th</sup> April and advised she would keep a grabber and bin bag aside. Mr Hadwen said he was sure Dr Coffey would attend if it did not clash with any parliamentary work.
- iii. The Clerk had attended the final Allotment Training session along with Cllr Marriage and both reported that it had been very useful. The sessions were an opportunity to learn 'best practice' and ask questions of those who were experienced in the management of allotments.
- iv. The Roundabout had been installed on the Playing Field. This had been partly funded by grants from the Rope Trust, the Lovewell Blake Fund, Cllr Ninnmey and Cllr Reeves' Enabling Communities Budgets, fundraising by the children who requested the equipment, and the shortfall was covered by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- v. Communication had been received from SALC with regards to numerous events planned for the D-Day Celebrations on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024. This had all been passed to the new administration of the Community Council, who had many events planned. The Clerk had applied for a grant from Awards For All and had requested funding from Innova (Bucklesham Solar Farm) to fund the celebrations. Cllrs Ninnmey and Reeves had contributed £500 each from their Enabling Communities Budgets.
- vi. The Thermal Imaging Project had been a success again this year with another 15 village homes benefiting from using the equipment.
- vii. The Clerk had been informed by a haulage company who will be operating out of Valley farm in the future about the plans for further HGVs to be on this site. The Managing Director assured the Clerk that all drivers had been informed that they must turn right when leaving the site and are not permitted to drive through the village.

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

- i. To agree the proposed Tenancy Agreement for the Allotments (as sent to Councillors on 08/03/24).

The Clerk had amended the proposed Tenancy Agreement reflecting best modern practice, following the training on Allotment Management from SALC. Cllr Marriage disputed the necessity of allowing bonfires given that it is now not considered very environmentally friendly to burn waste, given the site's close proximity to Foxhall tip, and the Council's commitment to biodiversity net gain. A lengthy discussion took place regarding allowing bonfires to continue on the Allotments in the future.

Cllr Brinkley proposed that all existing Tenants be allowed to continue to burn if absolutely necessary, adhering to all regulations (i.e. taking into consideration wind direction, type of brazier etc) but that any new tenants will be bound by a new agreement which does not permit bonfires of any sort at any time. This was seconded by Cllr Lenton with 5 in favour and 1 vote against.

The Chair suggested inviting all tenants to an informal meeting once the CAT had been completed. Barker Gotelee Associate Solicitor, Sam Read, who was administering the CAT on behalf of the Council, reported that he was just waiting for details from ESC of the licences and agreements with individual allotments holders and once received he would be able to send his final report.

**Action: Clerk**

**7. Documentation:**

- i. To receive notification of addition to Asset Register – Roundabout (as sent to Councillors on 08/03/24).

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

**Action: Clerk**

**8. Highways:**

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

The Council's report detailing the many reasons for the request for a reduction in speed limit on the C375 had been sent to Suffolk Highways for inclusion in their Speed Limit Report. The Clerk had contacted the two individual Suffolk County Councillors who will be making the decision to invite them to the village and show them in person the issues involved. Unfortunately, these invitations had been declined due to Councillors fearing they may be accused of predetermination. Cllr Mulcahy had informed the Council that a decision was imminent.

The Chair commented he felt the Council had done all they possibly could to get a positive outcome for the campaign. All Councillors agreed that they were shocked to hear that the Parish Council would be expected to pay for the road improvement costs as this had not been mentioned by Suffolk Highways or Cllr Mulcahy at any point before. The Clerk was asked to send an urgent email to Suffolk Highways to clarify the point.

**9. Planning:**

- a. To receive report from Gary Bareham on progress of the Castlemore Homes development.

A update on the progress of the development had been received and circulated by the Clerk. The Chair asked the Clerk to congratulate Gary on the excellent achievement of scoring 45/45 on the Considerate Constructors Scheme, putting the development in the top 7% of residential sites in England.

The Chair stated that he was very disappointed to hear that none of the 'Shared Ownership' or 'Affordable Rented' properties had been given to people with a specific Bucklesham connection. Flagship Homes stated that none of the new occupiers of those properties had a previous connection with the village, but that the criteria for a 'Local Connection' did not mean Bucklesham specifically, rather anywhere in the East Suffolk area. The Chair said he felt that the Council had been grossly misled by the developers in their initial meetings, as the implication had been that these properties would be for people with a specific connection to Bucklesham residents in the first instance.

Cllr Roper said she felt it was very disappointing that the road-widening would likely be the last part of the development to be completed, as it was very inconvenient for local residents that the road was so narrow.

**Action: Clerk**

- b. To discuss DC/24/0449/FUL Foxburrow Farm Brightwell, change of use of land for storage of shipping containers (associated with Port Of Felixstowe).

The Parish Council had not been contacted for comment from ESC as a Statutory Consultee, but the Chair had requested this be put on the agenda for discussion as it was very likely to impact the village if permission were granted.

Chair's initials: .....

Councillors made the following comments:

- How many additional road movements per day are likely to occur?
- There is very limited information on the portal.
- Highways will have to factor in traffic movements.
- There are 3 applications on this site:
  - One for containers
  - One for storage for caravans
  - An appeal against a refusal of an application
- Waldringfield Parish Council are objecting.
- Empty containers make a lot more noise than full ones.
- Valuable agricultural land will be lost.
- We need to ensure the extra traffic does not come through the village on the C375.

Cllr Brinkley proposed the Council **Object** to the planning application. This was seconded by Cllr Lenton and all were in favour. The Clerk was asked to register the Council's objection on the ESC planning portal and to request that if planning permission is granted, any traffic from the site would not be permitted to use the C375.

**Action: Clerk**

**10. Finance Matters:**

a. To review accounts as at 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and review Bank Statements.

The accounts for 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 had been sent to all Councillors and there were no questions. The Clerk asked Cllr Marriage to sign the Bank Statements.

b. To discuss investment opportunities with CCLA Investment Funders (see Appendix A).

The Clerk had compiled a report of the scheme for Councillors to decide if it would be beneficial investing CIL funds with CCLA in order to maximise the interest payments. The Clerk reminded the Council that there should be considerable additional CIL paid at the end of April 2024, generated from the Castlemore Homes development. Cllr Bickers proposed that once the expected CIL had been received the opportunity should be seriously looked at again. This was seconded by Cllr Roper with all in favour.

c. To discuss Community Benefit Fund Draft Agreement with Bucklesham Solar Ltd.

Bucklesham Solar had sent the Council a Community Benefit Fund (CBF) Agreement with regards to the amount of funds that would be generated for the benefit of the village once the Solar Farm was in operation. The Clerk had requested assistance from ESC planning department with regards to this, but had been informed this was not something they could advise on as CBFs are not a material planning consideration. The Clerk had also asked other Suffolk Parish Councils with Solar Farms in their parishes for their advice, and Suffolk County Cllr Patti Mulcahy if she could assist the Council with information on the CBF.

Councillors agreed it was extremely important that the Council receive legal advice regarding the CBF as it was imperative to ensure the agreement was in order. Pretty's Solicitors had quoted £2,500–£2,750 to administer the document before the Council agree to sign.

Chair's initials: .....

The Clerk had enquired if CIL funds could be used to cover this cost but this was refused as it did not meet the funding criteria. Pretty's stated that they anticipated Bucklesham Solar would meet the legal fee and the Clerk had written to them to enquire if they would.

Cllr Gardner had discussed the CBF and the necessity for some legal advice with Chloe Lee, Communities Officer, at the Felixstowe Peninsular Community Partnership meeting. Chloe had offered to look into this on behalf of the Council and promised to respond as quickly as possible.

Cllr Brinkley proposed that the Council defer any decision with regards to instructing a solicitor until more advice had been received. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner and all were in favour.

d. To discuss the request for funding from CIL from the Village Hall.

The Council had received a request from the Village Hall Committee for £3,000 from CIL funds to finance further improvements to the Hall. These consisted of:

- The construction of a cleaning cupboard @ £650
- The repair of the serving hatch and installation of a splashback @ £350
- Full sand and seal and repair of the sprung wooden floor @ £2,000

Cllr Brinkley proposed the Council agree to the Village Hall Committee's request as it was vital to ensure the Hall remained a fantastic asset for the village, and it was an excellent use of CIL money for such a project. This was seconded by Cllr Lenton and all were in agreement. Cllr Roper said she supported the request, but wanted the Council to be mindful that CIL was not inexhaustible, and the Village Hall Committee should consider making their own provision for maintenance in the future.

e. To discuss the purchase of a Memorial Beacon for the D Day celebrations.

As part of the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of the D-Day landings, parishes across the country will be lighting memorial beacons on 6<sup>th</sup> June at 9:15pm. The Clerk had approached a resident of the village, a renowned craftsman, who had quoted £600 to make the beacon to be placed on the Playing Field. This covered the cost of all materials but clearly the quote had not included the gentleman's time, which he was giving for free.

The Clerk had approached Castlemore Homes to see if they would consider sponsoring the cost of the Beacon and they had agreed. Cllr Brinkley proposed that the very generous offer of the craftsman to make the beacon be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Roper and all were in favour.

f. To discuss funding of the wild flower seeds for the Church/School

The Clerk had been contacted by a resident of the village who was offering some wild flower seeds for the Playing Field at a reduced price. The seeds had originally been purchased for a wildflower meadow behind the Church but the project had needed to be postponed and the seeds were now surplus to requirements.

The Clerk was asked if CIL funds could be used for this purchase but unfortunately the project did not meet the criteria. Cllr Brinkley stated that the budget was extremely tight and there was no spare funds available for an unplanned expense. Although there appears to be significant funds available, the majority of this is 'Allocated Reserves' and the Council had previously committed to no unplanned expenditure. Cllr Brinkley proposed the decision be deferred until May's meeting, when it would be clear how much money was in reserves at the end of the financial year. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner and all were in agreement.

g. To authorise the following invoices for payment:

i. None £0.00

h. To note payments made since last meeting:

i. R Johnson (Clerk's salary and expenses Jan/Feb/Mar) £1,328.06  
ii. Playquip Playgrounds (Roundabout on Playing Field) £12,907.20

i. To note payments received since last meeting:

i. Enabling Communities Budget (for D Day celebrations) £1,000.00

j. To note Bank Balances as at 29<sup>th</sup> February 2023:

i. Current Account £14,906.12  
ii. Savings Account £18,338.08

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

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

The Chair said he felt that there was nothing more to discuss at present as Cllr Mulcahy had re-engaged with the Council, but that the item could be placed on the agenda again in the future if necessary.

**12. To receive a concern from the Clerk regarding accusations of her conduct made by a member of the public at an East Suffolk Council Planning meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024.**

The Clerk had made the Council aware that a remark regarding her conduct had been made by a member of the public who was speaking about their planning application at the East Suffolk planning meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The implication from the resident of the village was that the Council had been influenced in their decision making by the Clerk. It was alleged that there had been an unrelated disagreement with the applicant which had resulted in the Councillors deciding to object to their planning application.



The Chair informed the Council that he had watched the recording of the meeting, and expressed his extreme disappointment at the comments, stating they were both offensive and untrue. Cllr Brinkley stated that to suggest, and to allow to be recorded in a public arena, that the Parish Council were influenced by a reported unrelated disagreement between the applicant and the Parish Clerk is defamatory, and questions both the integrity and credibility of the Parish Council and of the Clerk.

Cllr Brinkley proposed writing to the resident as Chair, explaining that the Parish Council is an independent and totally unbiased group of volunteers. The objective of the Council is to manage the Parish budget, and to ensure that the community enjoys the resources and facilities of the village to their maximum, and that to suggest otherwise potentially brings the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk into disrepute and is totally unacceptable. This was seconded by Cllr Bickers and all were in favour.

**Action: Cllr Brinkley**

**13. To receive agenda items for the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024, including the Annual Parish Meeting).**

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 9:15 pm.

Signed: .....  
Chair

Date: .....

*Ruth Johnson*  
Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council

Chair's initials: .....