

Minutes of Bucklesham Annual Parish Council Meeting

Held on Wednesday 14th May 2025 at 7:00pm

In Bucklesham and Foxhall Village Hall, IP10 0DZ

Present

Cllr Trevor Bickers

Cllr Rhea Gardner

Cllr Clive Lenton (Chair)

Cllr Gemma Marriage

Cllr Kathryn McDonald

Cllr Kathryn Roper

Cllr Lynda Seagroatt

Cllr Lee Reeves (ESC)

Cllr Mike Ninnmey (ESC)

Ruth Johnson (Clerk)

3 members of the public were present

1. To elect the Chair of the Council for 2025/26 and signing of the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'.

Cllr Roper nominated Cllr Lenton to be Chair of the Council for the coming year and he agreed. This was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all were in favour. Cllr Lenton then signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'.

2. Apologies for absence:**a. To receive apologies for absence.**

There were none.

b. To accept apologies for absence.

There were none.

3. 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.

4. Public Participation – To receive:**a. Reports from County and District Councillors:****i. Suffolk County Cllr Patti Mulcahy:**

No apologies were received from Cllr Mulcahy before the meeting. No report had been sent since February. Despite polite requests from the Clerk for support for the New Play Equipment Project, Cllr Mulcahy had not replied.

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 to all Councillors.

Cllr Reeves spoke at length about the Devolution proposals and what they would mean for Bucklesham.

b. Questions from any member of the public:

Two members of the public asked if there had been any progress of the Solar Farm. The Clerk confirmed that no further updates had been received.

5. To appoint persons to the following offices:

Position	Person Nominated
Responsible Finance Officer	Clerk
Councillor Internal Controller	Cllr Kathryn Roper
Village Hall Rep	Cllr Lynda Seagroatt
Archer Cartwright Rep (2 positions)	Cllr Rhea Gardner Cllr Clive Lenton
SALC Rep	Cllr Kathryn Roper
Felixstowe Peninsular Community Partnership Rep	Cllr Rhea Gardner
Village Handyman	Terry Seagroatt
Speed Indicator Device Wardens	Cllr Clive Lenton Hilary Garlick Keith Woods

Cllr Lenton proposed that all offices be appointed. This was seconded by Cllr Roper and all were in favour.

6. To remind Councillors to review their Register of Member's Interests entry at East Suffolk Council system (guidance notes previously sent to Councillors).

The Clerk reminded Councillors it was their responsibility to check their entry on the ESC Register of Member's Interests. Councillors **MUST** remember to include their own homes when listing 'Land where the member has an interest'. The Clerk had previously sent guidance on how to fill this in correctly.

7. To review and confirm all Direct Debits and Standing Orders presently set up by the Council.

The Clerk confirmed there was presently one Standing Order established on the Council's Bank Account: Information Commissioner's Office for £47.00 per annum. This had recently increased from £35.00 per annum. Cllr Lenton proposed that the Council continue with this Standing Order. This was seconded by Cllr Marriage and all were in favour.

8. To agree Minutes of meeting dated 13th March 2025.

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

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

9. 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 Parish Council had received many very positive comments about all the VE Day celebrations that had taken place around the village, and the Clerk had passed these messages onto the Community Council.
- ii. The grass cutting on the Playing Field by SCL Landscape had commenced with them completing the first two cuts of the year. The Clerk reported that the arrangement was working well so far and that having the entire Field cut and strimmed at the same time made for a much better job.
- iii. A new resident of Oak Tree View, Herman Hadley, has offered to provide free First Aid and defibrillator training to all residents. A date has been booked for Tuesday 1st July in the Village Hall from 7pm to 8:30pm. This will be advertised in the Bugle and it will be necessary for villagers to book their place to ensure numbers participating are kept to a manageable level.

New Play Equipment Project Update

- i. The consultation event at the Village Hall had been a success with a good attendance from residents. The completed surveys and feedback from those in attendance will be invaluable information to help move the project forward. The Clerk can use this information to support the grant applications.
- ii. The project has been split into three phases. An application to Awards For All for £20,000 has been submitted to fund Phase One.
- iii. An application to Tarmac Landfill Communities Fund has been submitted for Phase Two. The Clerk thanked Cllrs Marriage, McDonald and Roper for their input with the very lengthy and comprehensive application process.
- iv. The third grant application will be to East Suffolk Council's new Local CIL Play Fund which will need to be submitted by 31st May 2025. This is another lengthy application and it is also necessary to write a Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP), which will be a very large supporting document. The Clerk advised Councillors she is working on both of these.
- v. The Sponsored Bounce-athon had taken place on 10th May on the Playing Field with over 30 village children taking part in the 10 hour relay on a bouncy castle. Not all money had been collected yet but the amount so far stands at £1,306.

- vi. A small group of parents will be organising a Coffee Morning and Cake Sale at the Village Hall in August, and the Community Council have a few more projects in the planning stage.
- vii. A resident had asked if the Council would be interested in holding a Stag Beetle Stack Creation Day on the Playing Field, after they had participated at an event in Waldringfield. Cllr Marriage will be organising this in due course.

10. Documentation:

- a. To adopt the updated Financial Regulations (as sent to Councillors on 09/05/2025).

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Financial Regulations needed to be reviewed and re-adopted annually. The Parish Council usually do this in the September meeting, but NALC had recently updated them, so this had been brought forward to the May meeting. The Clerk assured the Council that the policies continue to use the current National Association of Local Councils (NALC) templates and so were completely correct and up to date. The minor alterations been had highlighted in red. As with previous years, Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) advise that it is not necessary to print off hard copies but that publishing them on the website is still required. All Councillors confirmed the Financial Regulations had been reviewed. Cllr Seagroatt proposed they be adopted, which was seconded by Cllr Roper and all were in favour.

- b. To adopt the updated Standing Orders as sent to Councillors on 09/05/2025).

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Standing Orders needed to be reviewed and re-adopted annually. Once again this annual review had been brought forward due to updates from NALC. All Councillors confirmed the Standing Orders had been reviewed. Cllr Lenton proposed they be adopted, which was seconded by Cllr Bickers and all were in favour.

- c. To adopt the new Councillor Internal Controller Policy (as sent to councillors on 09/05/2025).

This new Policy had been written by the Clerk to reflect the new role of Councillor Internal Controller. All Councillors confirmed this Policy had been read. Cllr Roper proposed it be adopted, which was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

11. Allotments:

- a. To discuss the ideas for the future use of the pit.

The Chair had requested this item be put on the agenda again at the March meeting to allow for more time for thought. Cllr Marriage reported that there had been considerable rubbish removed from the pit during the annual litter pick. It was agreed that further clearing of the pit should take place next Spring as it was now too overgrown. Once the pit was clear of rubbish Cllr Marriage suggested that stag beetle stacks, bird boxes and owl boxes could be installed to encourage wildlife.

b. To discuss the quotes for the gates and fence.

The Clerk had attempted to seek three quotes but this had proved difficult. Some local companies were unwilling to spend time working out a quote as they felt the Council were unlikely to chose them to undertake the work given previous quotes had not been taken up. AW Goddard had given a very rough estimate of £6,000.

Paul Last, a resident of the village and Allotment tenant, had quoted £3,030.00 to install a wooden post and rail fence and two galvanised steel 12ft vehicular gates. A gap could be left between the gate and fence to allow pedestrians to enter the site. Councillors requested the Clerk continue to seek further quotes as one was not enough information to make a decision.

Action: Clerk

c. To discuss the quote for the numbered discs to identify the plots.

Cllrs Marriage and Lenton had asked the Clerk to obtain a quote for small circular signs to establish the numbers of the individual plots. Signs For You had quoted £7.99 for each 30cm sign. The signs would be aluminium composite but designed to look like slices of logs to ensure they were in keeping with the area. Cllr Bickers proposed the quote be accepted and 20 signs be ordered. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

12. Playing Field:

a. To discuss the gazebo/shelter design and quote.

A full description of the plans had been supplied by TGC Landscapes, and Cllr Lenton and the Clerk had met with Mark Rogers to discuss the design in detail. Cllr Lenton had requested a bespoke shelter of 16ft x 8ft with a height of 2.2m at the back and 2.1m at the front. The gazebo would be constructed from CLS treated timber with two layers of felted roofing and handmade heavy duty trellis to the sides and rear. There would be U-shaped seating on the inside, and grids on the flooring filled with grass seed.

A shelter had been requested by many people completing the questionnaire at the consultation event and it was agreed that this design was considerably cheaper than any of the quotes from the play equipment companies. Cllr McDonald proposed the quote of £6,500 be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Bickers and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

b. To discuss the quotes to trim the trees.

Three quotes had been obtained from local tree surgeons:

Treescape £1,700 plus VAT
Tom Lyon £1,750 plus VAT
Paul's Tree Services £1,800 plus VAT

The Clerk reminded Councillors that they had employed the services of Tom Lyon to manage the poplar trees last year and had been very happy with his work. Cllr Marriage proposed that Treescape be asked to carry out the work as she had worked with them in her professional employment and recommended them to the Council. This was seconded by Cllr Roper and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

c. To discuss the purchase of dog poo bag dispenser.

The Clerk had been asked to investigate the cost of installing a dog poo bag dispenser on the Playing Field to encourage dog owners to clean up after their dogs. Glasdon UK Ltd supply dispensers at a cost of £138 with replacement bags costing £42 for 8 sacks of 250. However, similar dispensers can be purchased online at a cost of less than £40 with 540 bags costing £15. Cllr Lenton proposed the Council purchase the cheaper dispenser online in an attempt to solve the problem of dog mess on the Field. This was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

d. To discuss improving the bike jumps with grass on the banks.

Due to the lack of rain, the soil on the jumps had become very dry and crumbly. It was suggested by John and James from Twisted Oaks that laying grass on the sides of the jumps would help prevent them from collapsing and wearing away. To avoid having to continually water the jumps this was not suggested to be actioned until the autumn. The Clerk was asked to obtain a quote to turf the area as this would provide an instant solution and then the Council could compare the cost of seeds versus turf.

Action: Clerk

13. Highways:

a. To discuss the quote for clearing and skirting the path to school.

Suffolk Highways had quoted between £7,760 to £9,490 to carry out footway skirting of 685m length and vegetation clearance of 150m length on Main Road. This cost did NOT include pavement repairs as the route is due to be included in the 2026/27 footway surfacing programme. There would also be an additional £2,629 Professional Services charge which must be paid before work is carried out. This amount was merely to cut back the vegetation and remove soil that had spilled onto the path and push it back into the Field.

Councillors expressed their dismay that such a high charge could be payable to cut back the vegetation, especially as this would no doubt return in a season. The Clerk reported she had not yet received an official reply to the request for Highways to designate the path as a cycle path. Highways Liaison Officer Josh White had indicated unofficially that he thought this very unlikely as a 2m width at least would be needed for a cycle path and there are stretches of the path where this would not be anywhere near possible.

The Clerk reported that she had built a good working relationship with Josh White and that he has replaced Justin Lewis as Bucklesham's Highways Liaison Officer. Given the high costs involved in Highways clearing the path, Josh recommended the Council look again at their Community Self Help Scheme. This had been previously rejected by the Council at the meeting on 10th January 2024 Minute 11.b. However, since then the scheme appears to have changed considerably and the reasons for the Council's rejections may not still be valid. The Clerk was asked to compile a new report with updated information for the Council and to put this on the agenda again for July's meeting.

Action: Clerk

14. Planning:

- a. To discuss DC/25/1381/FUL Demolition of garage and erection of new garage, Shell Cottage, Church Lane, IP10 0DX

The Chair noted that all Councillors had studied the documents provided prior to the meeting. Councillors were reminded to align their comments to material planning considerations.

Councillors made the following comments:

- No objections.
- None of the neighbours have objected.
- The higher roof would not cast a shadow on any other garden.

Cllr Gardner proposed that the Council register a comment of 'No Objection' to the application. This was seconded by Cllr McDonald and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

15. Finance Matters:

- a. To accept and sign Annual Accounts for Year End 31st March 2025

The Clerk was thanked for producing the accounts so quickly after 31st March and congratulated on the presentation of them by the Chair. Cllr Lenton proposed they be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr Bickers and all Councillors were in agreement.

- b. To accept Internal Auditors Report for 2024/25 and 'Internal Audit Report' of Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR 2023/24).

Both these documents had been sent to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Bickers proposed they be accepted and acknowledged as received. This was seconded by Cllr Roper and all Councillors were in agreement. Cllrs referred to the comments from the Internal Auditor as to the excellent standard to which the accounts were produced.

- c. To agree and complete Section 1 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2023/24

The Clerk read each point of Section 1 Part 3 of the AGAR in turn. Cllr Bickers proposed that the Council answer in the affirmative to each point. This was seconded by Cllr Roper and all Councillors were in agreement.

d. To agree and complete Section 2 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2023/24.

This section had previously been sent to Councillors. Cllr Mc Donald proposed the figures were correct and should be reported in the AGAR. This was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all Councillors were in agreement.

The Chair signed all relevant papers, the Clerk agreed to publish these on the website and to send a link to all documentation to PKF Littlejohn as per the instructions.

e. To agree the CIL Report for 2024/25.

The CIL Report had previously been sent to Councillors. Cllr Bickers agreed it was a correct statement, which was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all Councillors agreed.

f. To agree Reserve Allocations as at start of 2025/26.

Cllr Seagroatt proposed the Reserve Allocations were a true record of Reserves as at start of 2025/26 financial year. This was seconded by Cllr Roper with all in favour.

The Council's Reserves Policy states that there should be 9 to 12 months expenditure set aside for various emergencies, which would equate to £14,000. The current General Reserves are £5,096. The Clerk informed the Council that the Reserves Policy can be reviewed at the September meeting and the figure could be amended if the Council so wished.

g. To receive the Internal Control Statement for year ending 2024/25.

This document had been previously sent to all Councillors. Cllr Roper proposed the Internal Control Statement be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Marriage and all were in favour. Councillors agreed that now the new role of Councillor Internal Controller had been agreed to, it strengthened the Council's Internal Controls further still.

h. To agree to add Cllrs Marriage, McDonald and Roper to the bank account signatories.

Cllr Seagroatt proposed that all three newer Councillors be added to the bank account signatories. This was proposed by Cllr Gardner and all were in favour. The Clerk had the bank mandate form ready and Councillors completed this.

i. To review accounts as at 30th April 2025 and review Bank Statements.

The accounts for 30th April 2025 had been sent to all Councillors and there were no questions.

j. To authorise the following invoices for payment:

- i. None

k. To note payments made since last meeting:

i.	R Johnson (litter pickers)	£19.49
ii.	D Bracey Play Inspections	£450.00
iii.	HMRC (Clerk's PAYE)	£12.84
iv.	ICO	£47.00
v.	T Seagroatt (Maintenance)	£160.00
vi.	SALC (Subs)	£278.48
vii.	SALC (Internal Audit fee)	£398.40

l. To note payments received since last meeting:

i.	ESC Precept	£7,079.50
ii.	ESC (ECB grant)	£1,000.00

m. To note Bank Balances as at 30th April 2025:

i.	Current Account (No. 80152285)	£9,054.48
ii.	Savings Account (No. 00605875)	£0.00
iii.	CCLA Investment Account	£57,000.00

Cllr Roper, acting as Councillor Internal Controller, reported that she had inspected the accounts and everything was in order. Cllr Roper proposed that finance matters *i* to *m* were accepted, seconded by Cllr Seagroatt, with all in favour.

Action: Clerk**16. To agree date for Clerk's Annual Review.**

Cllr Lenton and Cllr Gardner agreed to conduct the Clerk's Annual Review and agreed a provisional date of 24th June at 2pm in the Village Hall.

17. To receive agenda items for the next meeting of the Parish Council (Wednesday 9th July 2025).

There were no other agenda items as at the meeting from 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 8:30 pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date:

Ruth Johnson
Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council

Chair's initials: