

Minutes of Bucklesham Parish Council Meeting

Held on Wednesday 9th July 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 Lynda Seagroatt (Vice Chair)

Cllr Lee Reeves (ESC)	Cllr Mike Ninnmey (ESC)
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Ruth Johnson (Clerk)

1 member of the public was present

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

Apologies were received from Cllr Roper (prior engagement).

b. To accept apologies for absence.

Cllr Lenton proposed that Cllr Roper's apologies were accepted. This was seconded by Cllr McDonald 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:**

Councillor Mulcahy had sent details of SCC initiatives and her apologies for not attending.

The Clerk notified the Council that Cllr Mulcahy had not responded to any requests to support the Play Equipment Replacement Project and this had been mentioned by the grant awarding bodies.

- 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 Chair thanked them for their attendance and their detailed reports which are always well received.

Cllrs Ninnmey and Reeves talked at length about various issues which were of interest to Bucklesham and could directly affect residents, including Devolution, anti-social behaviour in the district, planning, and housing. The Chair thanked both Councillors for their time and knowledge of all issues.

- b. Questions from any member of the public:

The member of the village present requested that the Parish Council tidy up the village. The resident expressed her dissatisfaction with the state of some people's front gardens. The Clerk explained that this was not a Parish Council matter and could only be reported to East Suffolk Council's Environmental Health Department if it constituted a public health concern, which it didn't.

4. To agree Minutes of meeting dated 25th June 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 Seagroatt 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. Following the Clerk's review, and discussions around some Councillors' difficulties in preparing for meetings, the Clerk had suggested publishing all documents relating to agenda items which Councillors would need to have read before the meeting. These will be published on the website with the agenda and appear as appendices. The Clerk hoped this would aid Councillors, would also be useful for residents wishing to have further information, and would increase transparency of Council business.
- ii. The Clerk reported that there was no update from HSBC on the request to add new Councillors to the authorised signatories. Once actioned, this will allow Cllrs Marriage, McDonald and Roper to authorise Council payments. However, the Clerk had received a recommendation to investigate the possibility of transferring the current account from HSBC to Unity Bank. This is an online bank specialising in working with local government, specifically Parish Councils. Literature gathered was being circulated among Councillors and this would be on the agenda for the meeting in September.

- iii. Cllrs Marriage and Lenton, along with village handyman Terry Seagroatt, are booked onto a training course on 6th August organised by Suffolk Highways. To ensure Bucklesham can work on the Highway and undertake minor tasks, it is necessary to undertake this training and register for the Highways Self-Help Scheme. The request for volunteers to help will be actioned once the training has been completed.
- iv. Cllr Roper attended the SALC AGM in Bury St Edmunds on 1st July. As she was unable to attend the Parish Council meeting she had sent a full report to Councillors via email. A request to look again at forming an Emergency Plan for Bucklesham had come from Cllr Roper following the SALC AGM. This will be on the agenda for September's meeting when Cllr Roper will be in attendance.
- v. The defibrillator and CPR training evening had been very well attended and a big success. The Parish Council were thanked by those in attendance for organising it, and huge thanks went to Herman and Jackie for offering their time for free. Herman has offered to put on a First Aid session in the autumn as requested by some of those at the training. The Clerk will organise this and advertise in the Bugle.
- vi. The Clerk had received an email from PKF Littlejohn requesting further information with regards to the Audit. The information requested had been supplied and all questions answered satisfactorily. The Clerk then received an email confirming the Limited Assurance Review had been completed successfully. This will be signed off in the September meeting once official confirmation had been received.
- vii. Suffolk Coastal MP Jenny Riddell-Carpenter is launching a road safety campaign around primary schools across the Suffolk Coastal constituency. The petition is calling upon the Government to urge Suffolk County Council to develop and publish a tailored Road Safety Action Plan for every primary school in the constituency. The Clerk has the petition for anyone in the village who wishes to sign it and will advertise this on a Bugle Bulletin.
- viii. The Village Hall Committee have reluctantly had to increase the Hall hire charges to cover an increase in costs. Charges had not been increased for 8 years and were deemed unavoidable to ensure the Hall remained viable. The cost to all groups had increased by £5 per session. This will increase the hire charge for Parish Council meetings as of 1st October.

New Play Equipment Project Update

- i. The Clerk reported the excellent news that the Council had been successful in its bid for a grant from East Suffolk Council's Local CIL Play Fund. The full amount requested of £45,000 had been awarded. Once the results of the other grant applications for funding are known, the money will be released.
- ii. The application for £20,000 from Awards For All had unfortunately not been successful. The feedback for the unsuccessful application was puzzling but the Clerk explained that this is a very popular fund and very oversubscribed so it was possible that the response was a standard, generic reply. The Clerk suggested that the project could still be on track as the Council has £46,000 in CIL funds which could be used.

- iii. The application for £30,000 from Tarmac LCF has now been strengthened due to the positive result from ESC Local CIL Play Fund. The Clerk has been in regular contact with the administrators of the fund to inform them of project updates. The board will not make a decision until October, so fundraising efforts will continue in the meantime.
- iv. A Coffee Morning is planned for 30th August which will be organised by some parents of children who will benefit from the equipment. Councillors and the Clerk will also be helping on the day.

Action: Clerk

6. Documentation:

a) To adopt the Code of Conduct

Councillors confirmed that they had all read the Code of Conduct (2020) and informed the Clerk that they had understood the requirements.

b) To adopt the BPC Media Policy

The Clerk had been asked to write this policy as the East Anglian Daily Times and the Ipswich Star had recently run several stories regarding the village, and it was felt that a policy should be in place to ensure consistency in dealing with the press.

This policy had been shared by Thurston Parish Council with a few minor amendments made by the Clerk to ensure the policy was relevant to Bucklesham.

The Clerk explained that following publication of the minutes, she is often contacted by EADT reporters who wish to run a story on certain items of interest on the agenda. On the occasions when the Clerk had given more information and a statement from the Parish Council, the articles had all been positive. On the occasion where the Clerk had not engaged with the press, the article had been written anyway with a number of inaccuracies.

It was agreed that all articles written about Bucklesham in the last few years had put the Parish Council in a very positive light, showing it was very proactive and that there was a good community spirit in the village. Councillors agreed that articles written about the Play Equipment Replacement Project all help to publicise the project, which will help with successful grant applications. Articles written about Highways issues showed residents that the Parish Council was proactive over matters that were important to them, and articles written about community events in the village showed the great work of the Community Council and may encourage others to join in.

Cllr Bickers proposed that the new Media Policy be adopted by the Council and that the Clerk continue to engage with the press as and when she is contacted for comment. All comments are to represent the corporate position and the views of the Council. This was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

7. Finance Matters:**a. To review accounts as at 30th June 2025 and review Bank Statements.**

The accounts for 30th June 2025 had been sent to all Councillors and there were no questions. The Clerk asked Cllr Gardner to sign the Bank Statements.

b. To discuss the request from Bucklesham Primary School for an no-idling banner

Bucklesham Primary School Head Teacher Rachael Rudge had requested the Parish Council consider purchasing a 'no-idling' banner to erect on the school fence. Felixstowe Town Council had purchased them for all Felixstowe primary schools but could not fund one for Bucklesham.

The Clerk had requested a quote and artwork from Labelcraft and the total cost was £125. The Clerk reminded the Council that this could be paid for using CIL funds. Cllr Marriage proposed the Council purchase the requested banner for the school. This was seconded by Cllr McDonald and all were in favour.

c. To authorise the following invoices for payment:

i. None	£0.00
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d. To note payments made since last meeting:

i. David Bracey Play Inspections	£144.00
ii. Mark Rogers (Gazebo deposit)	£2,275.00
iii. R Johnson (Clerk's pay and expenses April/ May/ June)	£2,241.29
iv. HMRC (Clerk's PAYE)	£131.77
v. Treescape (coppicing of trees on Playing Field)	£2,040.00
vi. Print 4 U (Bugles)	£108.00
vii. MH Goals (goal wheels)	£84.72
viii. Marmax (replacement picnic bench top)	£198.00

e. To note payments received since last meeting:

i. None	£0.00
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f. To note Bank Balances as at 30th June 2025:

i. Current Account (No. 80152285)	£2,507.37
ii. Savings Account (No. 00605875)	£0.00
iii. CCLA Investment Account (No. PS1007890-001)	£57,000.00

Cllr Lenton proposed that finance matters c to f were accepted, seconded by Cllr McDonald, with all in favour.

Action: Clerk

8. To discuss the Clerk's Review and approve recommendations arising from it.

Cllrs Lenton and Gardner had met with the Clerk on 24th June 2025 to review the Clerk's working practices over the past year. Details of the Clerk's Review had been sent to all Councillors.

It had once again agreed by Cllrs Lenton and Gardner and the Clerk that the relationship between the Council and the Clerk remains excellent. Communication is very strong between all parties and there were no issues raised at the Review. All Councillors had been given an opportunity to raise any concerns with regards to the Clerk's work and none had been brought forward. The Clerk thanked the Council for their support and encouragement during what had been another very busy year.

As the Council had agreed to the Play Equipment Replacement Project, it was acknowledged that there will be a lot more work in the months ahead. The Chair recognised the considerable work that had already taken place with all meetings, requested quotes, and the grant applications, and that this will be an on-going process. The Clerk made it clear again, as she had last year, that she was more than happy to do the extra work needed to ensure the Play Equipment Replacement Project was a success.

Councillors reiterated that the Clerk must make the Council aware if at any point she feels she is struggling to keep up with the work load and she must let the Council know if there is anything they can do to help.

Cllrs Lenton and Gardner had recommended in their report that any 'Cost of Living' increment be awarded once negotiated with the unions by NALC. The Clerk was grateful for this commitment. Cllr Lenton proposed that the Council award the Cost of Living increment. This was seconded by Cllr McDonald and all were in favour.

It was agreed by all Councillors that the Parish Council remains in an excellent position going forward. The Clerk was thanked for her time, enthusiasm and commitment to the village.

9. Allotments:**a. To discuss the quotes for a fence and gates**

At the meeting in May, the Clerk had been asked to obtain two further quotes for the fence and gates in order to adhere to the Financial Regulations. Quotes had been received from PL Services, The Suffolk Fencing Co Ltd, and A W Goddard Fencing Ltd.

It was deemed important to fence the entrance to the Allotments in order to deter people from wandering around the plots. Tenants had reported incidents of children on individual plots after dark, and also ramblers walking through the village and through the Allotments to access the farmland behind.

Cllr McDonald proposed that the quote from A W Goddard be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Lenton with all in favour.

Action: Clerk

Chair's initials:

10. Playing Field:**a. To discuss visitors to the Field after dusk.**

The Clerk reported that there had been a few incidents of village children playing on the Field after dark and causing a disturbance to residents of Field View. The Clerk had been telephoned late one evening by a resident reporting the noise and requesting that the children were asked to leave.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Field's opening hours are 'dawn til dusk' and that the latest incident had been at 11pm which was way after dusk. On this occasion all the children had been known to the Clerk and they had all left of their own accord shortly after the Clerk had been contacted.

Councillors agreed that a reminder of the rules of the Field should be shared in the next Bugle newsletter, but reiterated that for her own safety the Clerk should not approach anyone on the Field engaging in anti-social behaviour.

b. To discuss the quotes for turf for the sides of the bike jumps.

The Clerk was asked to obtain quotes to turf the sides of the bike jumps to prevent them from collapsing. It was agreed that grass would strengthen the jumps but that this should not happen until the Autumn.

Cllr Marriage stated that grass seed would be a more cost effective and more successful way to grass the jumps and recommended Boston Seeds as a supplier. The Clerk was asked to look into this and it would be discussed again at the next meeting in September.

c. To discuss locking the goals and the broken wheels and nets.

The code to the padlocks is shared with all villagers, and people are asked to lock them away after use. Councillors agreed that the goals are a big attraction for non-residents, which has occasionally resulted in anti-social behaviour. The number of non-residents using the Field has increased again with organised, unauthorised training sessions and large groups from outside the village travelling to Bucklesham to use the goals. Access to the goals is only possible if residents have not locked them and the Clerk reported that, despite numerous repeated requests, residents frequently leave the goals unlocked. Unfortunately, the goal nets and four more wheels are now broken. Two wheels were replaced at a cost of £84.72 in May. A lengthy discussion took place about the value of the goals for village children versus the attraction of the goals bringing non-residents to the Field which has resulted in littering, noise disturbance and village children not being able to play.

Councillors agreed to leave the goals unlocked, to remove the chains and padlocks, and to monitor the situation. Ensuring the goals are locked is impossible to enforce and as they are frequently left unlocked it was deemed pointless.

The Clerk was asked to investigate alternatives to full sized goals which may be less of an attraction to non-residents.

d. To discuss the burnt picnic bench top.

It had been reported by several FOPs (Friends of the Playing Field) that a disposable barbecue had been used late one evening and placed on top of one of the picnic benches which resulted in the top being melted. Marmax Recycled Products Ltd had supplied six replacement slats at a cost of £198.

Cllr Lenton agreed to fit the replacement slats and said he would ask the resident whose family accidentally caused the damage to help him. The Clerk was asked to remind residents in the next Bugle that fires, including barbeques, are not permitted on the Field and to also produce some signs to place in the picnic area.

Action: Clerk

11. Planning:

a. To discuss DC/25/0976/FUL Replacement and enlarged machinery shed, Red House Farm, Tenth Road, IP10 0BP.

The Chair noted that all Councillors had studied the documents on the planning portal 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.

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

Action: Clerk

12. To discuss the Community Benefit Fund (CBF) agreement for Bucklesham Solar Farm.

Cllrs Bickers and Gardner had attended a meeting with Bradley Powell from Prettys Solicitors to discuss the draft agreement. Bradley had been very generous with his time and answered all questions, and had recommended that the Council proceed as there was no benefit in delaying.

The Clerk informed the Council that she had negotiated with Innova that the Charity Benefit Fund would also be administered by the Parish Council as well as the Community Benefit Fund. This would allow the Parish Council to distribute funds to village charities, ensuring that the money went to Bucklesham projects in the first instance. This amendment had been added to the draft Community Benefit Fund agreement.

Prettys Solicitors require all Councillors to show ID and proof of address in person before they will commence work on the CBF. The Chair had requested that all Councillors fulfil this requirement before the meeting in order to move forward. Bradley Powell confirmed that this had all been completed.

After lengthy discussion about the CBF, Cllr Bickers proposed that the Council instruct Prettys to act on the Council's behalf and proceed with all the legal negotiations and requirements necessary with regards to the CBF. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

- 13. To receive agenda items for the next Parish Council meeting (Wednesday 10th September 2025).**

Bucklesham's Emergency Plan would be on the agenda as requested by Cllr Roper prior to the meeting. The suggestion of the Parish Council providing a Bleed Kit alongside the defibrillator would also be discussed.

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 8:16 pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date:

Ruth Johnson
Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council

Chair's initials: