

Minutes of Bucklesham Parish Council Meeting

Held on Wednesday 10th September 2025 at 7:00pm
In Bucklesham 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 (Vice Chair)

Cllr Lee Reeves (ESC)

Cllr Mike Ninnmey (ESC)

Ruth Johnson (Clerk)

No members of the public were present.

1. Apologies for absence:

a. To receive apologies for absence.

There were none.

b. To accept apologies for absence.

There were none.

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 not sent a report, or indeed replied to any of the emails that the Clerk had sent her since the last meeting regarding requests for assistance with Highways issues. Councillors commented that this was very disappointing again. The last communication received had been in June.

- 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. Cllr Reeves was also thanked for attending the Mini-Fete in aid of the Play Equipment Project. It was noted that either Cllr Reeves or Ninnmey had attended every Council meeting since their election and their presence was always welcomed.

Cllrs Ninnmey and Reeves informed the Council of many developments on various issues which were of interest to Bucklesham and could directly affect residents, including Local Government Reorganisation, corporate fraud, other local Parish Councils' bio-diversity plan, the future of Trimley Station, and their interest and involvement in helping the Parish Council with highways issues. Cllr Ninnmey explained that he had attended a Community Partnership meeting at which it was discussed how they could help with the highways issues around the school. The Chair thanked both Councillors for their time and knowledge of all issues.

Cllr Reeves was also thanked for his immediate response to a request for assistance with a highways issue. It was noted that both Councillors are very quick to respond and act on behalf of the village.

- b. Questions from any member of the public:

There were none.

4. To agree Minutes of meeting dated 30th July 2025.

All Councillors agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Cllr McDonald 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 reported that HSBC had made another error with the banking mandate and while adding Cllrs Marriage, McDonald and Roper, had mistakenly deleted Cllrs Gardner, Bickers and Seagroatt. Discussions on whether the Council wish to switch accounts to another bank had been put on the agenda. HSBC had made a goodwill gesture of £50 which the Clerk suggested could be earmarked for the Play Equipment Project.

- ii. Councillors Lenton and Marriage, along with village handyman Terry Seagroatt, had attended Suffolk Highways' training event on 6th August and all had passed the course, gaining the NRSWA qualification. This meant that Bucklesham was permitted to join the Highways Self-Help Scheme and undertake works on the highway.

Cllr Gardner and the Clerk attended a meeting on 12th August with Highways to explain the details of the Scheme. The Council was provided with hi-vis safety clothing including jackets, trousers and vests, as well as safety hats and gloves, for all volunteers from Suffolk Highways free of charge. Any equipment needed to undertake the work such as hedge cutters, strimmers, wheel barrows, shovels, brooms, etc. can be purchased by the Parish Council and the cost will then be reimbursed by Suffolk Highways.

A group of volunteers along with Councillors undertook the work cutting the path to school on 31st August, ready for the start of term. This saved the Council the quoted charge of £10,000 from Highways.

Village resident Rosemary Watson had wished for the minutes to include her appreciation of Cllr Lenton, Cllr Marriage and Terry Seagroatt for undertaking the Highways Training, thus enabling the Self-Help group to work on the path to school. Rosemary stated that she felt their commitment to the village needed to be acknowledged and that all residents should be very grateful.

- iii. Suffolk Highways Liaison Officer Josh White had met with the Clerk in the village to see the sites on Levington Lane that regularly flood. Josh agreed to add digging out the ditches and 'grips' to the list of work that needed doing, but warned the Clerk that this would not be considered urgent work and there may be some time before the work was completed.
- iv. The Clerk stated that the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are usually adopted in September's meeting, but reminded Councillors that this had been done in May to adopt the amendments sooner rather than later and it was not necessary to re-visit the documents so soon.
- v. The Stag Beetle Stack Creation afternoon was a huge success and several parents had emailed to thank the organisers. Cllr Marriage had committed to make this an annual event.
- vi. Following the success of the defibrillator training, Bucklesham resident Herman Hadley had very generously agreed to put on First Aid training in the Village Hall on Saturday 18th October from 10am to 12pm, with part 2 on Saturday 25th October from 10am to 12pm. This will be another free event and will be advertised to all residents in the next Bugle.

vii. Cllrs Seagroatt, McDonald and Gardner, along with the Clerk, had attended training by SALC on the new 'Assertion 10' protocol, which will ensure all Councils adhere to GDPR ready for the 2025/26 audit.

During the annual Audit, the Council must confirm that they adhere to 9 assertions in the AGAR Part 3 Section 1, including ensuring effective financial management, and ensuring that the public have access to scrutinise the accounts etc. As of April 2026 there will be an additional assertion in the AGAR Part 3 Section 1, hence 'Assertion 10'.

The Clerk informed the Council that there will be a lot of work required to ensure the Council can confirm they adhere to Assertion 10. The Clerk has already amended an enhanced Internal Control Statement to include Assertion 10, ready to be adopted in November's meeting.

All Councils must have a gov.uk email address for the Clerk, a gov.uk website, a fully accessible website, and an IT Policy. Bucklesham Parish Council already has a gov.uk email address and website as the Council approved this move in 2024. Although the Clerk was confident that the website is largely accessible, it will be necessary to make some changes which will be very time consuming. The Clerk has also already prepared an IT Policy in draft form ready for adoption in November's meeting.

The Clerk reported that although preparation to adhere to Assertion 10 will be a lot of work, it was very good news that much of this had already been done, so the Council was in a much better position than many others. The Clerk is investigating the cost of an Accessibility Audit to ensure that the website is fully compliant, and has scheduled a meeting with Mark Tomkins from Aubergine 262, a company that specialises in compliant local government website design.

Cllr Gardner requested that the Clerk keep a record of all time spent on this extra work with a view to the Council paying her for this overtime. Cllr Bickers and Cllr Lenton stated that there was money in Reserves for this very reason.

New Play Equipment Project Update

- i. The application to Tarmac LCF should be decided upon in mid-September and the Council will be informed of the outcome at the beginning of October. The Clerk has been in regular contact with the administrators of the Fund to inform them of fundraising updates.
- ii. The Coffee Morning on 30th August, which was organised by some parents of children who will benefit from the equipment along with the Community Council, was a big success and raised £1,800 for the project. This had included two large anonymous donations from residents.
- iii. Bucklesham Players Drama Group had very generously donated £500 from their funds towards the project.
- iv. The total raised so far is £73,300. If the Tarmac LCF grant is successful, the project will have all the money needed to go ahead with the plans.

6. Documentation:

- a. To review the 'Risk Assessment (Financial)' (Appendix A) and 'Risk Assessment (Non-Financial)' (Appendix B).

The Clerk reminded all Councillors that these documents need to be reviewed annually. All Councillors confirmed these documents had been reviewed. The Risk Assessment (Financial) had been amended to include any possible risk associated with investing in the CCLA account, and to add details of the new Councillor Internal Controller Policy.

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. 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. Cllr Lenton proposed both documents be adopted, which was seconded by Cllr Bickers and all were in favour.

- b. To review Asset Register (Appendix C) and approve revised document.

The Asset Register is another document that needs to be reviewed annually, or each time a new asset is added or removed. The Clerk had added the new gazebo on the Playing Field, and the new gates and fence around the Allotments. Cllr Gardner proposed the Asset Register be adopted, which was seconded by Cllr Marriage and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

7. Finance Matters:

- a. To review accounts as at 31st August 2025 and review Bank Statements.

The accounts for 31st August 2025 had been sent to all Councillors and there were no questions. The Clerk asked Cllr Bickers to sign the Bank Statements.

- b. To set the budget timetable.

The Clerk set out the following timetable for the Budget and this was agreed:

- 1st November – Draft Budget established and sent to Councillors
- 12th November – Draft Budget discussed at full Council meeting
- January 2026 meeting – Budget agreed by full Council

- c. To agree Reserve Allocations.

The Reserve Allocations had been revised due to recent expenditure and income changes. After discussion, Councillors agreed the following Earmarked Reserves:

- Office Equipment - £500.00
- Election Expenses - £1,000.00
- Staff Costs Emergency Fund - £500.00
- Play Equipment Project Grants - £47,600.00

The total held in Earmarked Reserves was agreed at £49,600.00

Chair's initials:

The Clerk reminded the Council that the Community Council held some money for the Play Equipment Project (to be used as the third party funder if the Tarmac LCF application is successful), and the rest would come from CIL funds (the total of which currently stands at £38,542).

- d. To acknowledge receipt of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and Section 3 of Part 3 of the 2024/25 AGAR from PKF Littlejohn.

The Clerk advised that Section 3 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2024/25 had been returned by PKF Littlejohn with no comments.

Receipt of Section 3 of Part 3 of the AGAR and Notice Of Conclusion of Audit were acknowledged by the Council.

The Clerk was thanked by the Chair for all her hard work in getting the Audit through to conclusion.

- e. To acknowledge receipt of insurance renewal quote of £610.47.

The insurance renewal documentation had been sent to all Councillors for their review. The Clerk reminded Councillors that they chose to lock in to a 3 year deal with Gallagher in 2023. Cllr Seagroatt proposed the quote from Gallagher be accepted, seconded by Cllr Roper and all were in favour.

- f. To discuss moving from HSBC to Unity Bank.

The Clerk had previously sent Councillors information regarding Unity Bank to enable a decision to be made as to whether to switch from HSBC. Unity Bank has a specialism in Local Government bank accounts and has a team of administrators especially dedicated to Parish Council banking.

As HSBC has proved very unsuccessful and has made numerous mistakes with the banking mandate, Councillors agreed a switch to Unity Bank would be a good idea. This would also allow the Council to finally update to online banking, removing the necessity to write cheques.

The Switch to Unity Bank from HSBC was proposed by Cllr Bickers. This was seconded by Cllr Roper and all were in favour.

- g. To authorise the following invoices for payment:

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

i.	K Roper (travel expenses)	£36.10
ii.	Labelcraft (No Idling banner)	£150.00
iii.	R Johnson (gazebo plaque)	£32.89
iv.	A W Goddard Fencing (Allotment gates and fence)	£2,760.00
v.	McAfee subscription	£119.00
vi.	Signs For You (Allotment signs)	£249.26
vii.	Mark Rogers (gazebo)	£4,225.00
viii.	PKF Littlejohn (external audit)	£378.00

i. To note payments received since last meeting:

i.	Local CIL Play Fund (for Play Equipment Project)	£45,000.00
ii.	Donation from Silver Linings (for Play Equipment Project)	£50.00
iii.	HSBC (goodwill gesture)	£50.00

j. To note Bank Balances as at 31st August 2025:

i.	Current Account (No. 80152285)	£1,277.68
ii.	Savings Account (No. 00605875)	£0.00
iii.	CCLA Investment Account (No. PS1007890-001)	£95,000.00

Cllr Roper, acting as Councillor Internal Controller, had inspected the accounts on 3rd September and had reported her findings to the Council via email.

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

Action: Clerk

8. To discuss Bucklesham's Emergency Plan.

This item had been requested by Cllr Roper following her attendance at the SALC conference in July. Cllr Roper explained that while talking to other Councillors from various Parish Councils, she had learned of their villages' Emergency Plans and would be keen to establish one in Bucklesham.

Many Parishes have an Emergency Plan and this is encouraged by East Suffolk Council. In the event of an emergency impacting the Parish, certain residents could form an emergency coordination group. When safe to do so, these villagers would assess the impacts of the incident, coordinate the local response, inform and support residents and responding agencies as far as is practical.

It is usual to have villagers with a particular skillset on the coordination group, such as medical professionals, emergency responders, military personnel etc. Also included could be villagers with access to equipment such as chainsaws, towing equipment, generators etc.

If the village agreed to forming a Community Emergency Planning Group (CEPG), which was then registered with East Suffolk Council, all volunteers would be covered by East Suffolk Council's insurance if an emergency was officially declared.

The Clerk reminded the Council that this had previously been discussed at a Parish Council meeting on 5th January 2022 (see minutes page 83 item 11) and was subsequently promoted in the Spring Bugle 2022. Unfortunately, there had been no response from the village at the time. The idea was revisited again in January 2024, but once again there had been little interest from village volunteers, with only one resident offering their services.

The Clerk suggested that it might be worth individually contacting residents with known resources and skills to personally ask them to volunteer, as people don't often respond to generic requests. Cllr Seagroatt remarked that a lot of new residents had moved into the village in the last few years and there was now a much more positive community spirit. It was agreed that hopefully there would be a better response this time. Cllr Roper agreed to manage the Emergency Plan co-ordination and proposed the Council initiate forming a CEPG. This was seconded by Cllr Marriage with all in favour.

Action: Clerk and Cllr Roper

9. To discuss the provision of a Bleed Kit to be stored at the Village Hall (alongside the defibrillator).

Many villages are purchasing Bleed Kits as essential items of First Aid, which are being housed alongside defibrillators to be used in an emergency while waiting for assistance from the Emergency Services.

Cllr Lenton said that he felt that the recommended Kit at a cost of £500 was extremely expensive, and that it might be far better to organise some effective First Aid training, paying particular attention to serious bleeds. It was also noted that Bucklesham is very close to Ipswich Hospital and therefore not miles from help from the emergency services. It was agreed that purchasing of a Bleed Kit was not an appropriate use of limited Council funds at this time, but that this could be re-visited in the future if necessary.

10. Highways:

a. To discuss the request to reduce the speed limit on the C375 Brightwell Road to 30mph.

The Council's original request in 2024 to reduce the speed limit on the Brightwell Road had been dismissed by Suffolk Highways. The Clerk had since been advised by Joshua White, Highways Community Liaison Engineer, that the Council may be more successful if the request was for a shorter stretch of the road to become 30mph rather than the entire length.

Cllr Gardner had also received the support of Suffolk County Councillor Seamus Bennett at a recent Felixstowe Peninsular Partnership meeting. Both Joshua White and Cllr Bennett had suggested requesting that a 600m stretch of the road as it passed the School be reduced to 30mph.

The Clerk had requested a site meeting with Cllr Chris Chambers in his capacity as Member for Transport Strategy at Suffolk County Council. Cllr Chambers had agreed to the meeting but a date had yet to be confirmed. Cllr Mulcahy had also been invited but had not responded to the Clerk's email or that of Josuha White.

Cllr Lenton proposed that the Council take the advice of Joshua White and Cllr Bennett and continue to pursue the request to reduce the speed limit on the Brightwell Road. This was seconded by Cllr Marriage and all were in favour. The Clerk was thanked for not giving up on this very important issue.

b. To discuss the parking issues at Bucklesham Primary School

This item was requested by Cllr McDonald following several recent concerns raised by parents of children at the School. Cllr McDonald reported that far more cars than usual were parking on the yellow lines approaching the bend since the start of the new school year. Sometimes cars were parked way beyond the bend, causing considerable hazard to other road users, and two serious 'near-miss' incidents had occurred that morning.

The Clerk reminded the Council that land owner Joe Ramsey had been approached in 2023 to ascertain if he would sell or rent a portion of his land by the School for a car park. Mr Ramsey had been open to discussing the idea but Cllr Mulcahy and Justin Lewis from Suffolk Highways had informed the Council that Suffolk County Council would not fund a car park. The Clerk also reported that she had never seen a grant that would consider car parks as a suitable project for funding.

Councillors discussed the issue at length and the following comments were made:

- The issue could be eased if all village children walked to school, and if non-residents parked further down beyond the yellow lines.
- The Shannon pub had previously offered spaces to park, and so did the Village Hall, but parents were not willing to walk from the village.
- At one time we had traffic cones on the yellow lines but that made no difference either – people just moved the cones onto the path.
- The police are not able to give out tickets on a regular basis, although they do attend at random times and this does have an impact.
- The Head Teacher is very supportive of the Council and does all she can to encourage parents to park legally, but she is not in a position to enforce parking violations.
- The School has reduced drop-off times in the morning to a shorter window which has not helped.

Councillors suggested:

- Parents could reform the 'walking bus' that used to operate, where parents would meet at The Shannon and walk up with their children in a group.
- The Parish Council could write to parents to remind them of the potential consequences of dangerous parking.
- The Parish Council could put out traffic cones on the yellow lines and have a presence at peak times as an extra deterrent.

The Clerk was asked to request a meeting with Head Teacher Rachael Rudge, with Cllrs Marriage and McDonald in attendance, to see if there was anything that the Council could do to help the situation and if she would be in agreement to any of the suggestions.

Action: Clerk

c. To discuss forming a Speed Watch Group

This item was requested by Cllrs Bickers and McDonald following their concerns about speeding traffic through the village. Judi Hallett, Clerk of Melton and Ufford Parish Councils and friend of Bucklesham Parish Council, had provided the Council with information regarding forming a Speed Watch Group. The following points were noted:

- It will be necessary to have a team of volunteers. Ideally around eight to twelve (the more volunteers in the team, the less sessions individuals will have to do).
- Each volunteer will need to be able to stand for one hour, will need to be able to read a car number plate accurately, and will need to be able to hold the 'gun' out at arm's length for around thirty seconds at a time.
- Each session will need to be made up of three volunteers: one on the gun, one calling out the details, and one writing it all down.
- Each session will ideally last one hour.
- The group must have a leader to organise a rota and send in the report sheets after each session to Suffolk Police (this needs to be done within 48 hours of the session).
- Each volunteer must complete an application form and have a DBS check via Suffolk Police (no cost).
- We will need to identify two or three locations in the village where the team will be permitted to stand. Each location will need to be assessed and authorised by Suffolk Police.
- The Speed Watch kit will be provided by Suffolk Police and contains:
 - 2 x signs to be put out
 - 1 x gun (with batteries)
 - Yellow hi-vis bibs for the volunteers
- All volunteers will need to be trained and will need to watch a training video and sign to say they have done so.

Cllr Lenton proposed that a Speed Watch Group be formed and that the Clerk contact Suffolk Police to start the process. This was seconded by Cllr Bickers, and all were in favour.

An informal training session with Judi Hallett had been arranged for Saturday 11th October, to be held in the village. Cllrs Lenton, Bickers, Gardner, Marriage, and McDonald all volunteered to be a member of the group. The Clerk was asked to inform residents in the next Bugle that the Council were forming of a Speed Watch Group, and request volunteers to help.

Action: Clerk

11. Playing Field

- a. To discuss grass seeding the bike jumps.

Cllr Marriage reported she had measured the area, had arranged for the delivery of the correct amount of grass seed needed, and was happy to undertake the work.

- b. To discuss installing a water butt on the new sheltered seating area.

Terry Seagroatt had suggested that a water butt be fitted to the new shelter/gazebo to harvest rain water for watering any plants on the Playing Field. Cllr Lenton welcomed the suggestion but said he had concerns about Legionnaires' disease and bacteria that can sit in water pipes. Cllr Roper said she felt it would be open to vandalism. Cllr Gardner and the Clerk reported that sadly someone had already attempted to set light to the gazebo and it had been scorched. Councillors agreed that although a water butt was a good suggestion, it would be impossible to police and would be open to vandalism.

- c. To discuss installing pigeon guards to the tops of the swings and cleaning the equipment.

The Clerk had received an email from a resident of the village with regards to the bird mess and moss on the swings which had made them unusable. Although the resident's husband had tried to clean the mess off it was still not suitable for a small child as it was ingrained in the rope. Councillors stated that with luck the new equipment would be installed in the next few months and pigeon guards could be placed on the top to prevent this happening.

12. To nominate a representative of the Council to lay a wreath at the Remembrance Day Service at St Mary's Church on 9th November.

Cllr Gardner offered to undertake this duty, as she had done in previous years. The Chair thanked Cllr Gardner for the offer and all Councillors agreed she would be an excellent representative of the Council once again at this very important annual event.

13. To receive agenda items for the next Parish Council meeting (Wednesday 12th November 2025).

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 8:55 pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date:

Ruth Johnson
Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council

Chair's initials: