

**Minutes of Bucklesham Parish Council Meeting**  
**Held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7:00pm**  
**In Bucklesham Village Hall, IP10 0DZ**

Present

CLlr Trevor Bickers

CLlr Rhea Gardner

CLlr Gemma Marriage

CLlr Kathryn McDonald

CLlr Kathryn Roper

CLlr Lynda Seagroatt (Vice Chair)

CLlr Mike Ninnmey (ESC)

CLlr Patti Mulcahy (SCC)

Ruth Johnson (Clerk)

0 members of the public were present.

**1. Apologies for absence:**

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

Apologies were received from CLlr Lenton (work commitment).

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

CLlr Seagroatt proposed CLlr Lenton's apologies be accepted. This was seconded by CLlr Roper and all were in favour. CLlr Seagroatt, as Vice Chair, assumed the position of Chair for the meeting.

**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:**

No report had been sent prior to the meeting but CLlr Mulcahy was in attendance so gave a verbal report.

The 20's Plenty signs for Main Road as it approaches the school are due to be installed in the coming weeks.

The scheme to improve the A12 will shortly be sent to central government as they will provide the funding.

The requested replacement of the hardstanding and sign at the bus stop on Brightwell Road has stalled. The Passenger Transport Officer (PTO) incorrectly stated that there had never been hardstanding or a sign, and also noted that the bus stop was a 'customed' and not a 'marked' stop, so therefore there was no requirement to mark it. This decision has been challenged and Cllr Mulcahy promised to forward the email from the PTO at the end of next week as she would be very busy over the next few days.

Local elections will now take place in May and Cllr Mulcahy shared her feelings on how confusing the situation had become, stating there was a lot of uncertainty ahead.

The Clerk asked Cllr Mulcahy about a statement on her profile page on SCC's website that stated her outside interests included 'Bucklesham Quarry Liaison Group'. A Bucklesham resident had asked the Clerk for more information on said group as they had been heavily involved in the village's opposition to the Quarry back in August 2000 and did not recall Cllr Mulcahy being involved in any way. The resident asked the Clerk if there is such a thing as Bucklesham Quarry Liaison Group in existence currently. The Clerk had been involved in the village's response to the Quarry application and did not have any details of a Quarry Liaison Group back then, or in any of the years following. None of the current Parish Councillors were aware of said group.

Cllr Mulcahy said she was unaware of there being a Bucklesham Quarry Liaison Group. She advised the Clerk that this had been added to her profile by Democratic Services when she was elected in 2021. Cllr Mulcahy reported that this had now been removed.

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

A report had been sent to the Council prior to the meeting and was included with the agenda as Appendix A.

Cllr Reeves sent his apologies as he was attending a Cabinet Meeting. Cllr Ninnmey spoke at length about ESC initiatives including the new recycling bins, planning issues, a new fund for Parish Councils, and his personal opinions on the reversal of the decision to cancel the local elections in May. He noted that the rise in the precept for ESC equated to 11p per Band D house per week.

Cllr Seagroatt thanked Cllr Ninnmey and Cllr Reeves for their recent grant of £1,000 for Bucklesham Village Hall. It was noted that both Councillors Reeves and Ninnmey are very generous with their funds and this is greatly appreciated.

- b. Questions from any member of the public:

There were no members of the public present.

**4. To agree Minutes of meeting dated 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026.**

All Councillors agreed that the Minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Cllr Roper 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.

Chair's initials: .....

**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 play equipment has started to be removed by Terry Seagroatt in anticipation of the new equipment being installed in the week following Easter (7<sup>th</sup> April 2026).
- ii. Cllr Lenton and Cllr Marriage undertook the March inspection of the Allotments and were satisfied that all was in order. Tenants have been reminded not to compost green waste in the pit.
- iii. The Council has received 3 packets of wildflower seeds from ESC. These can be sown anywhere in the village (Cllr Marriage to action).
- iv. The Clerk had inadvertently caused a data breach by sending a form with data of twelve volunteers to a group email entitled ‘Community Speed Watch’ instead of a Suffolk Police email entitled ‘Community Speed Watch Co-ordinator’. The Clerk had followed the procedure in the Data Breach Policy which included reporting herself to the Information Commissioner’s Office, recalling the email, and apologising to those whose information was shared. Ten of the twelve volunteers affected had assured the Clerk that they were not concerned as the information was not deemed sensitive. The remaining two volunteers had not replied.

The Information Commissioner’s Office had closed the case stating no further action was necessary but had provided information on how to prevent a breach in the future. The Clerk had acted upon those recommendations and had referred herself for further GDPR training.

- v. The Community Council has decided to re-launch Bucklesham’s Annual Produce and Handicraft Show to be held on Sunday August 9<sup>th</sup> 2026. The last show had been in 2019, since the Covid pandemic had prevented it from being held in 2020. Full details for all residents will be in the Bugle and on Bulletins. The whole village, the members of the Garden Club, and all Bucklesham Allotment Tenants will be invited to enter their homegrown and homemade produce, and the Village Cup will once again be awarded to the winning household. This will be a free event for the whole village.
- vi. The Clerk had attended East Suffolk Council’s Marmot Place Event on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Parish Councils are being encouraged to consider what they can do to improve the outcomes and life chances of their residents. There should be a focus on health, education and well-being. The Clerk has arranged that the Parish Council will work alongside the Community Council in hosting a ‘Cuppas and Cakes Café’ on regular Saturday mornings in the Village Hall. The Community Council will sponsor the mornings which will provide drinks and cakes to all in attendance, along with an opportunity to socialise with other residents of the village, play board games etc, chat, and if necessary be signposted to organisations that can provide assistance with any of the difficulties residents may face as a result of living in a rural area. The first ‘Cuppas and Cakes Café’ will be open on Easter Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> April, from 10am to 12pm in the Village Hall.

- vii. The application to the Children and Young People’s Culture Fund has been successful and the Council have been awarded £2,240 to provide four Photography Workshops for residents of the village who are aged 8-18 years. The Workshops will be lead by professional photography teacher Sadie Windscheffel-Clarke and held in the Village Hall from 10am to 1pm on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May, Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August, Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August, and Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2026. These free Workshops will provide cultural opportunities for young people in the village that may not usually be open to them. Places on the Workshops will be limited to 16 and on a first come, first served basis.
- viii. Sharon Hinds, Housing Enabling Officer from ESC, and Sue Downs, Housing Advisor from Community Action Suffolk (CAS), have contacted the Council to enquire as to their interest in bringing forward a small rural development on a Rural Exception Site (RES). ESC’s housing delivery target has risen by 83% to 1,667 dwellings per year and they are very keen to work with Parish Councils who may assist them in reaching this target.

The Clerk had a meeting with both Sharon Hinds and Sue Downs and explained that the Council previously worked with Hastoe Housing in 2019, who had been keen to develop the corner of the field on Main Road, adjacent to Potash by the pumping station. CAS and the Council had undertaken a Housing Needs Survey which showed clear evidence of a need for social housing in Bucklesham. The development had fallen through and the land owner went on to sell the land which was then developed as Oak Tree View at the other end of the village.

Sharon Hinds stated she would contact the Council after the results of ESC’s Call For Sites had been published, to see if there was any possibility of a RES being developed in the village.

**Action: Clerk**

**6. To receive report from Cllr Gardner on the Felixstowe Peninsular Community Partnership meeting held on 04/02/2026.**

Cllr Gardner reported to the Council that the meeting had included a 'Review of the Year' and one of the four Partnership Priorities had been 'Increasing Road Safety around Schools in the Peninsula'. This had been an opportunity for Cllr Gardner to publicly thank ESC Community Officers Chloe Lee and Sam Read, both of whom had completed an application which requested funding from the ES Community Partnership Board on behalf of the Council. The board met on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and awarded £10,000 to the Parish Council to help with the cost of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which will reduce the speed limit on the C375 Brightwell Road.

On behalf of the Clerk, all Councillors, and Bucklesham School Head Teacher Rachael Rudge, Cllr Gardner also thanked Cllr Seamus Bennett, Cllr Mike Ninnmey and Cllr Lee Reeves for all their support and advice, which encouraged the Council not to give up the 25 years of campaigning for the speed limit reduction.

Cllr Gardner also reported that there is a bid for Felixstowe to enter a competition to become the '2028 Town of Culture', and adverts asking for ideas and letters of support will appear before end of March 2026.

Cllr Seagroatt thanked Cllr Gardner for her attendance and for representing the Council well.

**7. Planning:**

- a. To discuss planning application DC/25/3657/LBC – to replace timber framed windows with black powder coated aluminium casement windows, Coverdale House, Newbourne Rd, IP10 OBU

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:

- This is just a slight amendment to the previous application which we supported.

Cllr Roper proposed the Council ‘Support’ the application. This was seconded by Cllr McDonald and all were in favour.

- b. To discuss planning application DC/26/0439/FUL Change of use of land from paddock to residential garden. The Bungalow, Tenth Road, Bucklesham IP10 OBP.

The Chair noted that all Councillors had studied the documents on the planning portal prior to the meeting. The applicants had been invited to the meeting but had not been in attendance. Councillors were reminded to align their comments to material planning considerations.

Councillors made the following comments:

- This is just adding a small square parcel of land to their existing garden.

Cllr Marriage proposed that the Council register a comment of ‘Support’ to the application. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner and all were in favour.

**Action: Clerk**

**8. Finance Matters:**

- a. To review accounts as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and review Bank Statements.

The accounts for 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026 had been sent to all Councillors and there were no questions. The Clerk asked Cllr McDonald to sign the Bank Statements.

- b. To approve the letter of engagement from SALC to be our Internal Auditor for 2025/26.

All Councillors confirmed they had read the letter of engagement prior to the meeting and agreed with the terms and conditions. Cllr Seagroatt proposed that SALC be asked to act as Internal Auditor for the year 2025/26. This was seconded by Cllr Bickers and all were in favour.

**Action: Clerk**

- c. To accept the quote from Gallagher insurance of £720.41 to add the Village Hall to the Parish Council’s existing insurance policy.

The Clerk informed the Council that the Village Hall Committee had already paid £720.41 into the Parish Council’s bank account to cover the additional charge of adding the Hall. Gallagher Insurance also quoted an additional £192.56 from 1<sup>st</sup> May, to cover the new play equipment which should be completely installed by that date. The excess on the policy was £250. Cllr Bickers proposed that the quote be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr McDonald and all were in favour.

- d. To authorise the following invoices for payment:

i. Gallagher Insurance	£720.41
ii. Suffolk Highways	£7,381.39

- e. To note payments made since last meeting:

i. T Seagroatt (installation of signs)	£66.75
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- f. To note payments received since last meeting:

i. Bucklesham Village Hall (insurance contribution)	£720.41
ii. HMRC (VAT refund)	£7,835.44

- g. To note Bank Balances as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026:

i. Current Account (No. 80152285)	£20,146.95
ii. CCLA Investment Account (No. PS1007890-001 )	£51,000.00

Cllr Roper, acting as Councillor Internal Controller, had inspected the accounts on 06/03/26 and had reported her findings to the Council via email. Cllr Roper requested that all Councillors take turns at authorising payments to ensure best practice. Cllr Seagroatt offered to make a guide to remind Councillors of the authorising process as some may be out of practice.

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

**Action: Clerk**

**9. Highways:**

- a. To discuss the recent spate of road closures in the village and the lack of information and notice given from Suffolk Highways.

Councillor McDonald had requested this item be put on the agenda. The Clerk reported some residents had also contacted her to ask why the roads had been signposted as ‘closed’ when in actual fact they had been completely open, and why the Parish Council had not informed residents. The Clerk responded to residents that Highways matters were not the remit of the Parish Council and that we had not been warned of the closures so were unable to inform residents in advance.

Chair’s initials: .....

Cllr McDonald reported that on one occasion Highways had closed Levington Lane for gas works, but the official diversion route was flooded. This meant residents from over 100 houses were unable to leave the village. The Clerk had removed the road closure sign and requested the gas works did not go ahead until the flood had been dealt with. Highways later informed the Clerk that the flooded diversion route had been resolved, but all that had been done was a 'FLOOD' sign had been erected. The Clerk liaised with the workmen, who then agreed to close the road for no more than 15 minutes at a time.

Cllr Roper reported that on several occasions 'Road Closure' signs were erected on Main Road but the road had not been worked on for several days. Also that the closure had been detailed as being in a specific place on Main Road, but was then considerably further down the road than it was supposed to be. Cllr Roper stated that this had repeatedly caused issues with the school bus and parents faced difficulties in making arrangements to get their children to school.

The Clerk had reported these issues to Highways and had received a reply which stated that road closures were implemented for good reasons, and that a small detour that inconvenienced residents was not something they would take into consideration when assuring the health and safety of their workmen. The email was from a 'no-reply' address which meant the Clerk could not explain that no workmen had been working on the road for days so their health and safety was irrelevant.

Cllr Seagroatt suggested that as well as the Clerk reporting issues, residents be encouraged to contact Highways themselves to show a strength of feeling in the village. The Clerk was asked to add an article in the Bugle.

**Action: Clerk**

**10. Allotments:**

a. To undertake the Annual Review of the Allotment Fee.

The Clerk reminded the Council that as part of the Annual Audit it is necessary to review all fees imposed by the Council, and that the hire charge for individual plots on the Allotments are the only fees that the Council imposes. It was noted that the revenue from the Allotments in 2025/26 was £690 and the grass cutting costs were £200. The grass cutting costs for 2026/27 were expected to be £216 as quoted by SCL Landscape, but could possibly be £324 depending on whether 4 or 6 cuts were necessary. Cllr McDonald clarified that revenue from the Allotments should also cover the Clerk's additional workload as a result of taking them on.

The Clerk reminded the Council that two new half plots had been made meaning an extra revenue of £40 in the coming year and also that all plot holders who were currently paying less than £40 a plot (as had previously been agreed with ESC) had agreed to pay an increase each year until they were in line with the £40. This would mean that in future years the revenue would reach £840 (21 full plots at £40) and that the forecast for 2026/27 was £744.

Chair's initials: .....

Cllr Seagroatt stated that the Council remained committed to ensuring that the Allotments did not cost the residents of the village anything, but that the Council were not profiteering from them either. Cllr Marriage proposed that the fees for a full plot remain at £40 per year and a half plot at £20. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner and all were in favour.

**Action: Clerk**

**11. Playing Field:**

- a. To discuss the issue of dog mess on the Playing Field and discuss purchasing additional signs.

The Clerk had once again been contacted by residents who complained at the amount of dog mess on the Playing Field, particularly around the children's play area. The Clerk had once again cleared the mess up despite all in agreement that this was not part of the Clerk's role.

It was agreed that this is most likely occurring as too many residents are walking their dogs on the Field in the dark and therefore it is impossible to note where a dog has fouled. Cllr Seagroatt stated that she felt putting up signs would make no difference she expected the people who are allowing their dogs to foul and not clear up will not be persuaded to do the right thing by a sign.

Cllr Roper suggested that the Council look again at the cost of fencing in the Play Area once the new equipment has been installed, in the hope that there may be CIL funds remaining. The previous quote for a fence around the play area (compliant with RoSPA regulations) was £20,000. This would, however, not prevent dog fouling on the rest of the Field, including the football pitch, bike jumps and woodland walkway. The Clerk was asked to write about this again in the next Bugle and ask residents for their suggestions on how to solve the problem. Cllr Seagroatt proposed the Clerk compose a letter to all known dog walkers of the Field, insisting that no one uses the Field outside the official opening times of 'dawn til dusk' and urging them to report others to ESC if they see them offending. This was seconded by Cllr Bickers and all were in favour.

**Action: Clerk**

**12. Documentation:**

- a. To review 'Asset Register' and adopt revised document.

The Clerk reminded the Council that the Asset Register needs to be reviewed annually, or each time a new asset is added or removed. The Clerk had added the Village Hall garage which was purchased from the Village Hall Committee to house Parish Council equipment.

- b. To review 'Safeguarding People at Risk of Harm Policy' and adopt revised document.  
c. To review 'BPC Privacy Policy' and adopt revised document.  
d. To review 'BPC Publication Scheme' and adopt revised document.  
e. To review 'BPC Formal Complaints Policy' and adopt revised document.  
f. To review 'BPC Data Protection Policy' and adopt revised document.

Chair's initials: .....

- g. To review 'BPC Data Protection Impact Assessment' and adopt revised document.
- h. To review 'BPC Data Protection Subject Access Request' and adopt revised document.
- i. To review 'BPC Cookies Policy' and adopt revised document.
- j. To adopt 'BPC Data Retention and Disposal Policy'.
- k. To adopt 'BPC Data Breach Policy'.
- l. To adopt 'BPC Volunteer Policy'.

All Councillors confirmed they had read all the documents. Cllr McDonald proposed that all Policies were adopted. This was seconded by Cllr Marriage and all were in favour. Cllr Seagroatt thanked the Clerk for all her hard work with these Policies.

**Action: Clerk**

**13. To discuss the proposal that the Parish Council strive to gain Bronze level status with the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS).**

Councillors had received information on the scheme before the meeting and the Clerk had provided evidence that the Council was well on the way to completing all the work needed to apply for the Bronze Award, with eventual goal of then progressing onto Silver and then Gold in future years if possible. The Clerk offered to do all the remaining work necessary without additional payment as she felt it was a very important goal for the Council to strive for.

The Clerk stated that she felt the current administration of the Council was extremely hardworking and that Councillors deserved recognition for this. The LCAS would provide an opportunity to strengthen civic pride and celebrate the achievements of the Council and the wider community.

Cllr Seagroatt proposed the Council register to achieve the Bronze Award. This was seconded by Cllr Marriage and all were in favour.

**Action: Clerk**

**14. To receive agenda items for the next Parish Council meeting (Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026) which will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, the Annual Parish Meeting, and the Community Council AGM.**

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 8:59pm.

Signed: .....  
Chair

Date: .....

*Ruth Johnson*  
Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council

Chair's initials: .....