

Minutes of Bucklesham Parish Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday 20th May 2026 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 Roper

Cllr Lynda Seagroatt (Vice Chair)

Ruth Johnson (Clerk)

10 members of the public were present

1. Apologies for absence:

a. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr McDonald (prior engagement).

b. To accept apologies for absence.

Cllr Marriage proposed Cllr McDonald's apologies be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all were in favour.

2. To receive any:

a. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest on Agenda items.

There were none.

b. Declarations of Other Registrable Interests or Non-Registrable Interests on Agenda items.

Cllr Lenton and Cllr Bickers declared a NRI on item 4.g as they both have properties that back on to Site 448 on ESC's Call For Sites map.

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. To agree Minutes of meeting dated 13th May 2026.

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

Chair's initials:

4. To discuss the Council’s response to East Suffolk Council’s (ESC) Call For Sites:

The results of ESC’s Call for Sites had been published and 8 sites had been submitted that were in Bucklesham:

- Site 10 – land on Main Road opposite Meadow View
- Site 42 – land on Main Road opposite the entrance to Church Lane (Potash end)
- Site 274 – land behind Village Hall
- Site 313 – land on Main Road on right before Bucklesham bridge
- Site 315 – land behind Field View
- Site 361 – land on left off Bucklesham Hall drive
- Site 448 – land currently being used as paddock behind Green Crescent
- Site 449 – land off Nacton Lane behind Forge Close and Meadow View

The Call for Sites map had been discussed at the previous Parish Council meeting on 13th May 2026, where Cllr Lenton proposed that a Village Meeting be called for Wednesday 20th May at 6pm in the Village Hall to allow residents to share their thoughts on the proposed sites. This would be followed by an additional Parish Council meeting with ‘Planning’ as the only item on the Agenda. The Council could then compile a list of comments on each site.

The Chair reminded Councillors that these sites had merely been submitted to ESC following the Call For Sites and that no assessment of the suitability of the sites had been made, and no planning applications were in at this stage.

According to East Suffolk Council, determining which sites ultimately become allocated in the new Local Plan will be informed by a range of assessments including sustainability appraisal, the evidence base (in relation to a range of matters such as transport, infrastructure, water and landscape), consultation, and the creation of a wider strategic vision and spatial strategy for the Plan.

An assessment of the sites will form part of that evidence. The site assessment itself will involve considerations of sites against a range of key constraints such as flood risk, environmental assets and infrastructure availability.

The Clerk had made extensive notes from residents’ comments in the Village Meeting that was held prior to the Parish Council meeting. Councillors reflected on those notes and discussed each site in turn.

There were many points that were applicable to all sites:

Access

Many sites had unsuitable or no access.

The Council is unaware if there are verifiable rights of direct access from the public highways across some intervening farmland to some of the sites or via adjacent land, therefore many sites could completely fail the standard threshold for strategic deliverability.

Chair’s initials:

To be included in the Local Plan, East Suffolk Council requires clear evidence that a site is physically and legally 'suitable, available and achievable for development'. Many sites were not.

Lack of Sustainable Transport Access and Highway Safety Risks

There is no pedestrian pavement serving many of the sites. Pedestrians would be forced to walk on the edge of Main Road, Nacton Lane, or Brightwell Road, which are already very busy roads.

NPPF Paragraphs 109 and 115 dictate that a 'vision-led approach' must be taken to ensure that 'safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users, expressly prioritising safe pedestrian and cycle movements first'.

There is currently no public transport route through the village, therefore all of the sites dictate 100% private vehicle dependency. This entirely contradicts the framework's requirement to avoid 'isolated homes in the countryside' and East Suffolk's mandate to offer a 'genuine choice of transport modes' to actively manage emissions.

Risk of Surface water flooding

Many of the sites are already subject to surface water flooding during heavy rainfall.

Lack of Core Infrastructure

Many of the sites are entirely disconnected from the public mains sewage network. East Suffolk's site assessment criteria for housing developments weigh heavily towards locations which have an adequate 'infrastructure availability' to accommodate growth.

Under the Local Plan glossary, infrastructure deficits that require extensive engineering interventions introduce 'Abnormal Costs'. A complete lack of strategic mains drainage would force a reliance on non-standard onsite treatment facilities or highly expensive network extensions.

These significant deficits heavily compromise the financial deliverability and viability of many of the sites making them ineffective use of land for housing.

Unresolved Risks to Local Biodiversity Networks and Protected species

Many of the sites are located near active and established wildlife habitats for protected species and wildlife corridors. In some cases this has already been formally noted and documented within the environmental evidence base compiled for nearby developments.

The Local Plan process strictly dictates that site selection must be informed by key constraints, specifically avoiding harm to local environmental assets.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) mandates that planning policies must protect and enhance wildlife-rich habitats, corridors, and stepping stones to ensure a mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Deliverability and Landscape

Under the current NPPF, a site cannot be considered ‘deliverable’ unless it is available now with a realistic prospect of housing completion within five years. Some sites nearer to the centre of the village have suitable access and infrastructure for housing in place, making them easier and quicker to develop than others.

Some of the sites sit in open countryside and any proposed housing developments should also consider the impact on local landscape character.

Infrastructure

Bucklesham has no shop, no Post Office or GP Surgery. Significant development in the village is unsustainable, but a modest development may be able to be accommodated.

In addition to the generic points above, specific points were made about the individual sites as follows:

a. Site 10 – land on Main Road opposite Meadow View

- Speed of traffic on Main Road is a concern if pedestrians are crossing to access the site
- There is significant field run-off from the asparagus field above
- The sewage works are pumped out far more often than stated by the developers
- This may be a ‘least worst’ site if housing is inevitable

b. Site 42 – land on Main Road opposite the entrance to Church Lane (Potash end)

- The site is too close to the Church and Churchyard
- Church Lane has ‘Quiet Lane’ status
- Is outside the Settlement Boundary
- There are already drainage issues in St Mary’s Park
- There are redundant sewage works on this land
- Entrance may clash with site 448
- This site is close to the footpath with easy access to school
- This may be a ‘least worst’ site if housing is inevitable

c. Site 274 – land behind Village Hall

- No access

d. Site 313 – land on Main Road on right before Bucklesham bridge

- Outside of settlement boundary
- No footpath to connect to village
- Prime farmland
- Too close to A12 – noise pollution
- This is the least worst place as it is on the edge of the village

e. Site 315 – land behind Field View

- No access
- Any commercial development could cause light and noise pollution to nearby residents of Field View and Levington Lane

f. Site 361 – land on left off Bucklesham Hall drive:

- No legal access from Bucklesham Hall drive
- Highways safety risks as on 60mph road
- Conflict with solar farm
- Outside of settlement boundary

g. Site 448 – land currently being used as paddock behind Green Crescent

Cllr Lenton and Cllr Bickers left the room.

- ESC informed the Council that this land is designated for use as a paddock only
- Access through Green Crescent is not viable
- Access from Main Road would cause a conflict with site 42
- Sewage works regularly overflows here

Cllr Lenton and Cllr Bickers re-entered the room.

h. Site 449 – land off Nacton Lane behind Forge Close and Meadow View

- Conflict with entrance of site 10
- Entrance through Meadow View is not wide enough
- Access from Nacton Lane would be unsuitable
- Outside of settlement boundary

The Clerk reminded the Council that no comments had been asked for from East Suffolk Council on the Call For Sites map as of yet. Once the consultation process is underway, the Council would have its comments in place ready to respond.

5. To adjust Box 11 Part 3 Section 2 of the AGAR to change from ‘No’ to ‘Yes’ in accordance with NALC guidelines.

This section had previously been sent to Councillors for discussion at the 13th May 2026 meeting. In that meeting, Cllr Seagroatt had proposed the figures were correct and should be reported in the AGAR, which was seconded by Cllr Roper and all Councillors were in agreement.

The Clerk asked the Council to agree to adjust Box 11 ‘Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?’ from ‘No’ to ‘Yes’.

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

Chair’s initials:

6. To receive agenda items for the next meeting of the Parish Council (Wednesday 8th July 2026).

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 7:36 pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date:

Ruth Johnson
Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council

Chair's initials: