



## Buckland Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Buckland  
Held in Buckland Village Hall  
On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 6.30pm

### Present:

Cllr Nigel Hayward (Chairman)

Cllr Jon Sainsbury

Cllr Carole Paternoster

Cllr Fiona Livingston

Clerk: Mrs Jane Lewis

Buckinghamshire Cllr Mike Collins

There were 8 members of the parish in attendance.

**Apologies:** Mrs P Graves – Buckland Old School Trust

### Chairmans Introduction

The chairman welcomed the attendees.

### 1. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2023

The minutes from the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

### 2. Chairmans report on the year 2023/2024

We are all custodians of Buckland and the role of Buckland Parish Council is to ensure we protect the parish and the environment in a way to allow proportional changes to evolve while keeping the parish as a safe and pleasant place to live.

Make no mistake this has been achieved despite on going challenges through the Neighbourhood Plan that has been updated and will be again to adapt to changes in the locality.

Budgeting for the parish has come under strain from the 168% increase in costs forcing BPC to make cuts on some programmes but where possible BPC ensures value for money is key.

The community orchard in Lower Buckland is growing at pace and is fully equipped with a water system to protect the trees in hot dry times, all the trees and activity has been funded through grants that BPC have applied for and in time will be a great asset to the parish.

BPC have proactively taken on Thames Water and their proposed pumping station. This is still on going to get the site moved to a more appropriate location. BPC have worked with local residents and Rob Butler MP to gain support.

I would like to thank all BPC councillors for all their hard work and time put into Buckland, all of our councillors are volunteers and without their efforts BPC Buckland would have merged into Aston Clinton and our identity potentially lost.

I also recognise the loss to BPC of Sue Gillingham who has retired from the council, Sue's knowledge of the parish and history will be missed but we all thank Sue for all the work she has put in. Thankyou

Finally I would like to thank our parish clerk Jane Lewis who has simply be magnificent and a pleasure to work with and a great asset to Buckland again. Thankyou Jane .

### 3. Presentation of Accounts

The Clerk to the Council, Mrs Jane Lewis, presented the unauthorised accounts. The figures showed that the final figures were in line with the proposed budget for 2023/2024. The accounts have been strongly audited and spending has been kept within requirements. The clerk was thanked for her work on these.

#### **4. BOST Treasurers report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

This year we have had major refurbishment expenditure on the Old School House. All the window frames in the house needed to be replaced. Since the Old School House is a listed building, we had to replace them like for like. Due to the age of the property, the window frames are non-standard with leaded lights, which meant they had to be custom made by a carpenter. The kitchen, now 25 years old, needed replacing. Along with a complete redecoration of the property inside and outside, the total cost was £35,802.

We planned the refurbishment after our tenants left in March 2023 and were able to welcome our new tenants in August 2023. This meant that the Trust lost 4 months rental income for the property. The Hall is due to be decorated inside and outside later this year. The quote for this is £9,000. We don't have a start date at the moment.

Hall lettings have been improving, with more regular bookings (6 weekly classes are now held here), more parties and at least one function every other weekend. The Hall will be out of use for a short period while the internal redecoration takes place which will mean a loss of rental.

It is now 25 years since the Hall and Old School House were refurbished and the Hall extended. This is the first major expenditure BOST has had to pay for maintenance of the buildings, which will total about £50k.

#### **5. Questions from the Floor**

A member of the public asked why the village precept had increased to 9.9% this year. The Chairman responded that costs had increased greatly across all areas including electricity, landscaping costs etc. BPC have thoroughly reviewed all contracts to ensure that best value for money has been received. Unfortunately difficult decisions have had to be made such as grass cutting of the verges will only be carried out 4 times this year compared to six last year. Buckinghamshire Cllr Mike Collins commented on the increased demand on funds for Buckinghamshire Council.

A member of the public asked what was happening with the bridleway and plots of land at lower Buckland. The Chairman responded that the land had been divided into several smaller plots and sold to different parties. BPC are currently reviewing ownership to ensure land is not used improperly. The bridleway has been used inappropriately by land owners for access to these canal plots on several occasions the padlocks and bollards have been removed without authorisation. BPC continue to work with Buckinghamshire Council and Puttenham Parish Council to prevent inappropriate use of the bridleway.

A member of the public asked about the current situation with Thames Water Pumping Station. The Chairman reported that the petition with 298 signatures had been delivered to Rob Butler MP. This would be presented to Parliament for discussion with the Business Secretary. There has been no further communication from Thames Water regarding the location of the pumping station.

Residents welcomed the BPC Newsletter that had been delivered to houses within the parish. They asked for the Council to continue keeping residents informed of council news in this way.

A resident suggested that an area within the burial ground be turned into a wildflower meadow while not in use. The Chairman said that BPC would look into this.

6. The Chairman thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He closed the meeting at 7.15pm.