Minutes of Bucklesham Parish Council Meeting

Held on Wednesday 11th November 2026 at 7:00pm

In Bucklesham Village Hall, IP10 0DZ

Present

Cllr Rhea Gardner	Cllr Clive Lenton (Chair)	Cllr Gemma Marriage
Cllr Kat McDonald	Cllr Kathryn Roper	Cllr Lynda Seagroatt (Vice Chair)

Ruth Johnson (Clerk)

Cllr Mike Ninnmey (ESC)

0 members of the public were present

Before the meeting started, Cllr Lenton paid tribute to former Parish Council Chair Heather Owen, who had died at the end of October. Heather was first elected to the Council in 2003 and had been a very proactive Councillor, achieving a great deal for the village. She served as Chair for the final four years of her term of office, and was widely respected as an honourable, knowledgeable, and fair-minded lady, who was a very good friend to many in the village and was renowned for her mischievous sense of humour. Cllr Lenton noted that Heather's persuasive techniques were used upon him, which is how he came to be on the Council. She will be very deeply missed by all.

1. Apologies for absence:

a. To receive apologies for absence.
Apologies were received from Cllr Bickers due to illness.

b. To accept apologies for absence.
Cllr Lenton proposed that Cllr Bickers apologies be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner and all were in favour.

2. To receive any:

a. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest on Agenda items.
There were none.

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

i. Suffolk County Cllr Patti Mulcahy:

The Clerk stated that she had not received a report from Cllr Mulcahy or heard anything from her since the last meeting. Cllr Mulcahy sent apologies for her absence.

ii. 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 and added to the Agenda as Appendix A.

Councillors discussed the Local Government Re-organisation (LGR). Suffolk will have their business case re-examined and decisions will be notified between late December and early 2027. Elections for ESC will be held in May 2027.

Councillors discussed the changes to the planning procedures, money available from the Enabling Communities Budget, and many ESC initiatives that may benefit Bucklesham residents.

b. Questions from any member of the public:

There were none.

4. To agree Minutes of meeting dated 9th September 2026.

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

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. **LGR** – The Clerk informed the Council of the latest news about the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). On Monday 7th September the Government announced that it was withdrawing its previous decision to create three new unitary councils in Suffolk. ESC explained a significant amount of work had been undertaken by teams across Suffolk's councils, alongside partners and stakeholders from across the county. This collective effort had helped strengthen their understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing local government in Suffolk and they stated it had reinforced their shared commitment to delivering the best possible outcomes for residents, communities and businesses.

What happens next:

- As a result of the Government's decision, there is currently no LGR proposal in place for Suffolk. Furthermore, a withdrawn decision cannot simply be restarted without a new formal decision by the Secretary of State. Decisions due in December 2026 or early 2027.
- The Government will carry out a rapid review of existing LGR proposals and will provide further detail on how this process will operate.
- Elections in May next year will go ahead. However, these will no longer be for the proposed Shadow Authorities and will instead take place on existing district and borough boundaries.

Devolution

The message from Government: devolution is continuing. The Government has confirmed that recent developments relating to LGR do not affect the timetable for devolution and will be publishing a new White Paper on 'Rewiring the State' later in the Autumn.

ii. The junior defibrillator pads expired at the end of September and the adult pads will expire in December. The Clerk reported that stocks are incredibly low nationwide, and the manufacturer has given a 12-month extension on the expiry date to cover this shortfall.

iii. The application for the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS) Bronze Award had been submitted and initial feedback was very positive. The assessors will work through the Council's application in November, and we should hear the results in early December.

iv. The Village Survey had been sent to all homes in Bucklesham and the findings were extremely positive –

- 100% of people scored between 7/10 and 10/10 on how happy they were living in Bucklesham, with 75% scoring 10/10.
- 100% of people scored between 8/10 and 10/10 for how happy they were with the work of the Parish Council, with 85% scoring 10/10.
- Residents noted that the things they liked most about living here were:
  - Friendly people
  - Active community and community spirit
  - The Playing Field and facilities
  - The pub
  - Village life
  - Village events
  - The peace and quiet
  - The active Village Hall
  - Proactive Parish Council
  - The countryside on our doorstep
  - Great neighbours

- Residents stated that they would like the Parish Council's priorities for 2027 to be:
  - Installing speed humps in Levington Lane
  - Setting up a community Share Station (clothes/food/books)
  - More Highways maintenance
  - Organising Craft Mornings
  - Reintroducing the Bus Service
  - Installing decorative 'gates' at the entrance to the village
  - Installing more bins to prevent littering
  - Making better use of the 'pit' on the Allotments
  - Using the Village Hall for a community shop and café
  - Solving the issue of parking at the School
  - Fencing off the play area on Playing Field
  - Increasing the use of Village Hall
  - Putting on more fundraising events
  - Installing signs to Seven Hills roundabout on Nacton Lane to prevent people turning into Forge Close.

The Clerk stated that the survey results would be included in the next edition of the Bugle with responses to the suggestions given.

v. Suffolk Parish Councils were given an opportunity to apply for trees left over from a display at the Suffolk Design Festival in Bury St Edmunds. Bucklesham had been successful in its application and awarded two European Larches (2.5 meters tall) and two Dawn Redwoods (4.5 meters tall) to plant on the Playing Field. Bucklesham residents Paul Last and Terry Seagroatt kindly offered to plant them on the Field and they are now in place.

vi. The Playing Field had been shortlisted for an East Suffolk Council Quality of Place Award under the 'Community' category. Playing Field Manager David Riddleston, Cllr Rhea Gardner, and the Clerk met with the judging panel and gave them a tour of the Field. The judges were all very impressed with the considerable amount of work that had been undertaken by the whole community, and David said he felt that to be shortlisted was a huge achievement and he was hopeful for a positive outcome.

vii. Following details of ESC's call for pavement, footpath and bridleway clearance sites in Cllrs Reeves and Ninnmey's Monthly Report, the Clerk had contacted Aimee McLachlan to arrange a site visit. This was to ascertain if any improvements could be made to the many overgrown, broken, and uneven paths and pavements in the village. The visit had taken place on 11th November and the Clerk had pointed out the many areas that needed attention. Aimee informed the Clerk that re-surfacing was the responsibility of Suffolk Highways, and that they are encouraging residents to undertake path and pavement clearance themselves as part of their village Self-Help Schemes. Aimee did accept that the extremely overgrown brambles on the path to school should be removed rather than repeatedly cut back and agreed to research the possibility of actioning this work in order to make future maintenance easier.

Action: Clerk

6. To review the progress of the BPC's Action Plan for 2026/27.

The Action Plan had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting and had been included as Appendix B to the Agenda. There were many points to update the Council on and many more examples of collaborative working within the village and wider community. The Clerk had republished the updated Action Plan on the website with the updates in **purple** so it was easy to identify all the work that had recently taken place.

Cllr Lenton commented that an amazing amount of work had been achieved by the Council once again, and that he was very grateful and proud that there had been a lot of public recognition of this.

7. To receive Village Hall Report from Cllr Seagroatt.

Cllr Seagroatt's report had been included in the Agenda as Appendix C:

'To help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Hall, the Committee organised a whole range of different events throughout the year, culminating in the Beetle Drive on 23rd October. The night was a big success and was very well attended by residents aged from 3 to 83 – and everyone had an enjoyable time.

The Village Hall Open Day on 12th September was another success and very well attended. All Hall User Groups were in attendance and most managed to gain new members on the day, which was brilliant.

With the Hall forecast to make another financial loss this year, the Committee reluctantly decided that it was necessary to increase the Hire Fee. The cost of a full tank of oil has increased from £785 to £1,100 since March, and the insurance, water and electricity costs have all increased. Ruth had already reduced her paid hours for Hall administration from 28 per month to 15 per month, but this would not have covered the full shortfall. The Committee unanimously agreed to increase the Hire Fee for all village hobby groups by £5 a week, to outside groups by £10, and to increase one-off bookings by £10 a session.

There had been a very unfortunate incident with a Saturday night booking when the Hall had been left in a terrible state. The Hirer had broken the terms of the Hire Agreement in numerous ways, including having an 8ft barbeque in the car park, continuing the party until well after the agreed finish time, and by leaving the Hall in a very unclean condition. To make matters worse, they had damaged the walls. It was then necessary for Terry to replaster and repaint. As a result, the Committee agreed to start charging a refundable damages deposit of £300 for any similar bookings in the future.

Finally, the Committee were extremely sad to hear of the death of Committee member Heather Owen. Heather had served on the Committee for many years, as Secretary and Bookings Clerk for much of that time, and was always heavily involved in helping to organise events. Heather was never one for a title and refused to wear a name badge at the Village Hall Conference, stating that she was no more important than anyone else in attendance. A name badge was made nonetheless, which Heather duly wore with pride, as it said 'Heather Owen, Chief Troublemaker'. Heather will be very much missed by all her friends on the Committee.'

The Chair thanked Cllr Seagroatt for her comprehensive report.

8. Bucklesham Community Council report from Cllr Seagroatt.

Cllr Seagroatt's report had been included in the Agenda as Appendix D:

'The Annual Scarecrow Festival, held over the weekend of 12th and 13th September, was not as well supported as in previous years, with far fewer scarecrows made. Those that were on display were a big hit though, and the Garlick family retained their crown by creating the winning scarecrow once again.

The Community Council were in attendance at the Village Hall Open Day on 12th September which will allowed the Trustees to show all residents the work of the Council and what is on offer for them. A few more residents offered to help out with events which was excellent.

The Christmas Craft Fayre will take place on Saturday 28th November in the Village Hall from 10am to 2:30pm and there will be 19 stalls in attendance. This will also be the last opportunity to purchase a lucky number for the 100 club with a first prize of £1,000.

Tickets for the Christmas evening event being held on Saturday 5th December in the Village Hall are selling well. A band has been hired to play 50s 60s and 70s music. It will be a 'Bring your own refreshments' event.

Plans for the 'Bucklesham Resident's Fun Day' – a celebration of the Community Council's 60th anniversary next year – are well under way. The committee have been offered help from two members of the Drama group who have a long history of organising the Martlesham Heath Fun Days so their input is very much welcomed.

Chair's initials: …….

This will be held on the Playing Field on 17th July 2027. There will be old fashioned stalls and games which will all be free of charge. There will also be a barbeque and ice creams and hopefully competitions such as welly throwing and egg and spoon etc.'

The Chair thanked Cllr Seagroatt for her report and said that he expects next years Bucklesham Resident's Fun Day will be a big success.

9. To receive report from Cllr Lenton on East Suffolk Council's Planning Forum on 16/09/26.

Cllr Lenton and the Clerk attended the Planning Forum at East Suffolk House, and Cllr Lenton gave a full report of the day which was attached to the Agenda as Appendix E.

Cllr Lenton said that it is clear there will be a lot of changes in the way that planning is managed in East Suffolk, and that the Council will continue to work closely with ES planning to ensure Bucklesham residents are fully informed.

10. To receive report from Cllr McDonald on the Felixstowe Peninsular Community Partnership Forum on 22/10/26.

Cllr McDonald's report was included with the Agenda as Appendix F.

'On October 22nd 2026, I attended the East Suffolk Community Partnerships Forum Day at Woodbridge School. There were a number of local charities; from National Literacy Trust and Suffolk Wildlife Trust, through to Lighthouse Women's Aid providing support to women experiencing domestic abuse, and Dora Brown Charity who help families declutter their homes.

I also visited VanESSA - a mobile support and advice van which can visit rural areas. They were all there to show what support they can offer communities such as Bucklesham.

The workshops were very interactive and informative. I went to the 'Marmot Place - Vibrant Communities' workshop where we discussed gaps in local provision, and I also attended a workshop run by Suffolk Libraries who discussed all the services they offer beyond books including art workshops for young people.'

The Chair thanked Cllr McDonald for her report and for attending the forum on behalf of the Council.

11. To discuss the Council launching a Bucklesham Parish Council Facebook page.

Cllr Roper had requested that this item be placed on the agenda as she felt that the most effective way to communicate with the residents of the village was through social media, and that the Council should consider launching a Facebook page.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that this idea had been discussed in the past but had been dismissed as many other Councils had reported problems with having social media accounts and had decided to shut theirs down. Considerable abuse and misinformation had been shared on other Councils' pages and monitoring this had proved to be extremely time-consuming. The Clerk had stated that she was not prepared to managed a social media account and that a volunteer would be needed if the Council wished to pursue this.

Cllr Roper offered to administrate a Parish Council Facebook page, with Cllr Marriage assisting, stating that she felt it was possible to have an 'information only' page which would not allow for further comments that might need to be policed.

Action: Cllrs Roper and Marriage

12. To discuss the Council's Bugle Bulletin email alert provider.

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to a number of other Council Clerks to ascertain what system of email alert communication is in place in their villages. A number of other Councils also use a Mailchimp account and have also had their number of free emails considerably reduced. To send more than 500 total alerts, Mailchimp require a subscription of £15 per month. There are currently 250 email addresses on the mailing list, hence why the Council can only send Bulletins out twice a month.

There are many similar free email providers available, however, other Clerks had reported that their initial offers of 5,000 free emails a month had quickly been reduced to a far smaller number and a paid subscription had been required. It was agreed that any free emails were likely to be an initial offer which would soon turn into a required paid subscription.

The Clerk reported that the percentage of recipients opening the Bugle Bulletins was on average only 30% and that potentially the new social media page would be a more effective way to communicate with residents. It would still be possible to directly email residents from the Parish Council's gov.uk email account for urgent information. Cllr Lenton reminded the Clerk that it would be vital to ensure the Council was complying with GDPR and that all email addresses were Blind Carbon Copied so that email addresses were not shared.

Cllrs agreed that the Bugle Bulletin should be discontinued once the Facebook page was set up and that all subscribers could be directed to that as a way to get instant Parish Council news.

13. To discuss the Allotment Boundary.

The Clerk had received a letter from ESC's Lawyer and included it as Agenda Appendix G. When East Suffolk Council transferred the Allotment site to the Parish Council in May 2024, there was a wedge of land which was missed off the transfer plan. In order to resolve the error, ESC propose that the wedge of land is now transferred to the Council for free to ensure it remains within the Allotment site.

The Clerk reminded the Council that they had paid for a surveyor to mark the boundary with stakes which would now be in the wrong position; some had actually already been removed by the farmer so the exact boundary was no longer obvious.

Cllr Lenton proposed that the Council ask ESC to instruct their surveyors to re-do the stakes including the wedge that was originally missed off. This was seconded by Cllr Marriage and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

14. Finance Matters:

a. To review accounts as at 31st October 2026 and review Bank Statements.

The accounts for 31st October 2026 had been sent to all Councillors and there were no questions. The Clerk asked Cllr Roper to sign the Bank Statements.

b. To discuss and provisionally agree the proposed Budget for 2026/27 (see Appendix H).

The Clerk had previously sent out the proposed Budget document for Councillors to consider. A discussion ensued as to whether the budget was sufficient as many costs of the Council had increased and the Budget was very tight. Councillors discussed three or four different items on the Budget and whether the amounts were appropriate. The Clerk was asked to amend the figures in light of the discussion. The Clerk informed the Council that ESC's figures were based on 243.73 Band D equivalent properties, down from 248.01 last year. This meant fewer properties paying Council Tax and contributing.

It was agreed to consider the budget again at the January meeting when the final decision would need to be made. The Clerk informed the Council that despite the Council's prudent financial management, utilising the interest gained from moving CIL reserves and grants into the CCLA investment account, and the revenue gained from the allotments, the precept would likely have to be increased by an estimated 15%. This equates to an increase of £10 per Band D household per year, to cover the additional estimated price increases, which would be an increase of 20p per Band D household per week. The total cost of the Parish Council for a Band D property would be £75.33 per year or £1.44 a week.

The Clerk reminded Councillors of the General Reserves Policy, and the recommendation from the Internal Auditor of the requirement to hold between three and twelve months' Net Reserve Expenditure (NRE) (which would be between £4,589 and £18,359) and that currently there was only £8,303 NRE held by the Council. It was also noted that once the CIL funds were used they could no longer be seen as a pre-emptive solution to unforeseen financial setbacks.

c. To discuss the Reserve Allocations (Election Expenses).

The Parish Council had received the estimated election cost breakdown for May 2027 and also an estimate for any by-election over the following 4 years. The cost to the Parish Council of the scheduled election on 6th May is estimated to be £1,362.

If ESC do not receive enough nominations to force an election, the only costs are the processing costs of the forms that are received (and subsequent notices etc). This cost is £12.55 per nomination received.

If there is an election in May, there will be a whole raft of costs including ballot papers, postal voting costs, staff costs, polling station costs etc. These costs will be shared with the District Council where possible as it will be run as a combined election. The District Council will also pick up the entire poll card cost where there is a combined election.

If there is a by-election beyond May, it is unlikely that it would be combined with another election in the area and all costs will be attributed to BPC. The cost of an unscheduled by-election is estimated to be £3,206.

Cllr Roper proposed that the Clerk increase the figure in Reserves for Election Expenses (currently £1,000) to £3,200. This was seconded by Cllr Lenton and all were in favour.

d. To discuss the requests for funding from:

i. Royal British Legion Poppy appeal £50.00

A sum of £50 had been budgeted for grants for the financial year 2025/26 which was earmarked for the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal. It had previously been agreed that the Council should not use any more of the precept to award funds to outside organisations and charities.

No requests from any other charities had been received this year.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that they can decide to donate to any charity, or to none, but that they would need to amend the budget in order to plan for any additional expenditure.

e. To discuss the quote for grass cutting on the Playing Field and Allotments for 2027 of £1,388.

A quote had been received from SCL which the Clerk had included as Agenda Appendix I. The costs had not increased from the current year. Cllr Marriage proposed this quote be accepted which was seconded by Cllr Roper and all were in favour.

f. To authorise the following invoices for payment:

i. None £0.00

g. To note payments made since last meeting:

i.	Aspect Contracts (Village Hall Asbestos survey)	£510.00
ii.	CAS Insurance	£1,769.62
iii.	SALC Payroll services	£54.00
iv.	R Johnson (expenses for tree planting on playing Field	£85.60
v.	Unity Trust Bank (charges)	£14.00
vi.	Microsoft Subs	£94.55
vii.	Suffolk Digital (Bugle printing)	£127.00
viii.	Suffolk Cloud (website hosting)	£180.00
ix.	HMRC (Clerk's PAYE)	£348.81
x.	Clive Lenton (keys cut)	£19.00
xi.	Sadie Windscheffell (photography workshops)	£900.00
xii.	David Bracey Play Inspections	£420.00
xiii.	T Seagroatt (village maintenance)	£180.00
xiv.	Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	£50.00

h. To note payments received since last meeting:

i.	CCLA (investment income)	£165.40
ii.	SCC Highways (refund for Highways equipment)	£2,879.06
iii.	Village Hall (contribution to Clerk's wages)	£760.05
iv.	Village Hall (reimbursement for Asbestos survey)	£425.00
v.	ESC Precept	£8,122.50
vi.	Allotment rents	£644.00
vii.	Village Hall (contribution to Insurance)	£866.71

i. To note Bank Balances as at 31st October 2026:

i.	Current Account (Unity Trust Bank)	£8,490.08
ii.	Investment Account (CCLA)	£25,000.00

Cllr Roper, acting as Councillor Internal Controller, had inspected the accounts, found all to be in order, and had reported back to the Councillors. Cllr Lenton proposed that finance matters *f* to *i* be accepted, seconded by Cllr McDonald, with all in favour.

Action: Clerk

15. Playing Field:

a. To discuss Playing Field inspections.

Following the retirement of David Bracey, it had been necessary to find an alternative inspector for the Playing Field. The Clerk had investigated the various options and had attached her report as Agenda Appendix J.

It had been previously suggested that volunteers could inspect the Field on a regular basis, and that the Council would only need to pay for a RoSPA inspection annually. The Clerk's Report strongly recommended that the Council continue to employ the services of an expert, and there were many reasons for this.

The Clerk informed the Council that she had written to all FOPs (Friends of the Playing Field), and other frequent users of the Field, to ask for help with regular inspections and litter picking of the Play Area. Unfortunately, only 2 volunteers had offered to help which was very disappointing and would make the suggestion unworkable. The Clerk asked that all Councillors help to litter pick on the Field when they are able.

Cllr Lenton proposed that the Council employ East Suffolk Services to undertake four quarterly inspections in the future. The Clerk was thanked for all the work involved in obtaining all the quotes and for compiling the report in order for the Council to make a considered decision. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

b. To discuss installing a fence and gates around the play area.

Cllr Lenton thanked the Clerk for obtaining four quotes for fencing in the play area, as had been requested at the last meeting, which were included as Agenda Appendix K. The quotes ranged from £18,000 to £42,000.

Councillors discussed this matter at length. It was agreed that the purpose of fencing in the play area would be to prevent dog fouling, however, this would not prevent dog fouling on any other area of the Field. Cllr Seagroatt repeated her previously made point that fencing the play area would be a waste of money if dogs were still fouling in other areas of the Field. She also stated she doubted all owners would keep their dogs on the outside of the fenced area.

Cllr Lenton proposed that the Council did not continue to pursue fencing in the play area. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner. Four Councillors were in favour, with one abstention and one vote against. Cllr Marriage suggested that the project be on hold and re-considered in the future should funds allow.

c. To discuss the repairs of the bike jumps.

Cllr Marriage had obtained a number of Heras fencing panels in order to close the jumps ready for repair. Cllrs Lenton and Marriage agreed to lead on the project and arrange a working party to repair the jumps ready to re-open in the Spring.

Action: Cllr Lenton and Marriage

16. To discuss providing a memorial bench to honour the memory of former Parish Council Chair Heather Owen.

Following the death of former Parish Council Chair Heather Owen, Cllr Lenton suggested that the Council purchase a memorial bench with a plaque to commemorate her legacy. Cllr Lenton also suggested that the bench be placed on the grass bank opposite Heather's cottage, Potash.

The Clerk informed the Council that a licence from Suffolk County Council would be required to site the bench in that position, which she had already provisionally applied for in anticipation of the Council's decision. Permission had been granted in principle and if the Council wished to go ahead the cost of the licence would be £180. The cost of the bench including plaque, fixings and delivery was likely to be £422.

Cllr Lenton proposed the Council purchase the licence and the bench with memorial plaque and ask Terry Seagroatt to fix the bench in place. This was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all were in agreement. The Clerk said she would agree on the wording of the plaque with Heather's family.

Action: Clerk

17. To discuss discontinuing the Community Speed Watch Group.

Councillors discussed that the CSW group has been undertaking weekly sessions since the first week of July and there had been a lot of organisational issues. Six volunteers from the original group no longer wished to participate, and three are currently unable to help for various reasons. Of the eighteen hourly sessions organised, there had been only nine cars detected speeding: four at 35mph, two at 36mph, one at 38mph, one at 40mph, and one at 47mph. Twelve sessions had detected no speeding vehicles at all.

Suffolk Police stipulate that sessions must not take place in the dark, or in the rain, or when the roads are wet, so it is more difficult to schedule sessions that people can attend in the Autumn and Winter months.

The Clerk reported that she had been contacted many times by volunteers who could not attend their session, who wanted to swap sessions, who simply forgot to attend, or who were unwell. After each session, whether it went ahead or not, whether speeding was detected or not, it was necessary to complete a Returns Sheet and send to Suffolk Police. Councillors agreed that CSW clearly takes up a lot of additional unpaid admin time for the Clerk.

The Clerk reported that Suffolk Police have agreed that the CSW group can be paused over the winter months and re-started in Spring. Cllr Lenton proposed that the Council pause CSW with immediate effect, this was seconded by Cllr Marriage with all in favour. The CSW would then hopefully re-start in the Spring with a new administrator if one could be found.

Action: Clerk

18. To discuss a Parish Councillor becoming a rep on the Orwell Green Stakeholder Forum.

The Clerk had been contacted by Lisa Burgess, Clerk of Martlesham Parish Council, who invited a representative from the Council to join a newly formed group of neighbouring Parish Councils that will be monitoring the proposed Orwell Green development. This proposed development would be on the edge of Foxhall by the Bucklesham bridge. Formally known as Orwell Village Green, this development was dismissed by National Highways in 2019 but looks set to be proposed again. The proposal is for 3,000 new homes on the A12/A14 corridor and would obviously have a significant impact on Bucklesham.

Cllr Roper offered to represent the Council at any future meeting, the first of which is expected to be in January, and report back to Councillors. Cllr Lenton thanked Cllr Roper for volunteering to take this role on which would enable Bucklesham residents to be kept informed of any developments with the scheme.

19. To agree Parish Council meeting dates for 2027.

The Council agreed that the most convenient day for all Councillors is a Wednesday.

The meeting dates for 2027 were agreed as follows:

Wednesday 13th January 2027
Wednesday 10th March 2027
Wednesday 12th May 2027 (*to include Annual Parish Meeting and Community Council AGM)*
Wednesday 14th July 2027
Wednesday 8th September 2027
Wednesday 10th November 2027

The Clerk asked the Council to consider *not* holding the Community Council AGM, the Annual Parish Meeting, and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on the same night in May 2027. Holding three meetings in the same evening last year had proved to be a lot of work and the meetings had felt rushed.

The Annual Parish Meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June each year, and must be held after 6pm. The Clerk acknowledged that it was more convenient to have all the meetings in one evening, however, many Parish Councils hold their Annual Parish Meeting on separate evenings. This allows for guest speakers to be invited, for reports from village organisations to be read aloud, and for refreshments to also be served which would make it a far less formal evening where residents may be encouraged to attend and engage with Council activities.

The Clerk requested that the Council consider holding the Annual Parish Meeting at the beginning of March and use this meeting as an opportunity to reflect on the four year term of office just served by the Councillors and all that had been achieved by them. It would also be an opportunity to ask residents what they would like the Council's priorities to be in the years ahead. Cllr Lenton stated he felt it may encourage more residents to stand as Parish Councillors in the coming May 2027 elections before the deadline at the end of March. The Clerk was asked to put this item on the agenda for the January meeting when a decision would be made.

20. To receive agenda items for the next meeting of the Parish Council (Wednesday 13th January 2027).

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.

The meeting closed at 8:59pm.

Signed: ……. Date: ……..
Chair

Ruth Johnson
Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council