

BUCKDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk: Ramune Mimiene, Buckden Village Hall Burberry Road Buckden PE19 5UY. Tel; 01480 819407

Minutes of the Annual Buckden Parish Meeting/ Assembly held on Tuesday 28 May 2024 at 7.00pm at the Village Hall

Present:

Chairman: Councillor Peter Clark

Councillors: Caroline Underwood, Anne Howell-Jones, John Thelwall, Gerald Sansom, Catherine Grigg, Madeline Fraser, Emily Lankfer, Anita Pancholi and Aidan Joy.

Clerk: Ms R Mimiene

CC Cllr Ken Billington

Village Hall Trust Chairman Matt Beldam

Diddington Estate Manager Andrew Johnson

Jo Hall, and Janet Thomas, Multi Scheme Administrators and committee members of Huntingdonshire Neighbourhood Watch Association (HNWA).

6 members of the public

MINUTES

- **Apologies received and noted from:**

BPC Cllrs D Duncan, A Bode and Mark Williams.

HDC Cllr Martin Hassall

Police Constable Neal Bartley

Neighbourhood Watch Buckden, Richard West.

Mrs M Clark

- **To Approve Minutes of Buckden Parish Assembly held on 23 May 2023**

Proposal: Proposed by Cllr AHJ, seconded by Cllr AJ, all in favour and it was RESOLVED that the minutes are approved as the correct record of the meeting. Carried.

- **Police report by Police Constable Neal Bartley** – Apologies received as urgent matters elsewhere meant that he could not join us tonight.
- **Huntingdonshire Neighbourhood Watch Association, Jo Hall**, please see **Appendix 1** for the full report.
- **Sustainability in Buckden**
 - **Update by HDC** – None.
 - **Update by BPC, - Carbon Footprint and Repair café Madeline Fraser** –

Presentation received, full report can be found under Agenda reports here [Annual Assembly 2024 – Buckden Parish Council \(buckdenpc.org.uk\)](https://www.buckdenpc.org.uk/Annual-Assembly-2024)

Cllr EL left the meeting

- **Flooding Group update, Cllr J Thelwall**, report attached, please see **Appendix 2** – asked for written report to attach to the minutes
- **Annual Reports by County Councillor Ken Billington and District Councillor Martin Hassall**

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CC Cllr KB presented a verbal report. He congratulated BPC Cllrs for their work as volunteers and explained how impressed he is by BPC support and collaboration.

Cllr KB is working to improve the relationships between various bodies like National Highways, HDC and CCC and many other organisations for the benefit of the residents.

Question was raised, why so many weeds are still growing between the roads and pavements / kerbs when the agreement was that CCC will do the work to remove the weeds, so no gutters are going to be blocked by weeds again.

Cycle path to St Neots along the A1. The safety of it needs urgent attention, especially crossing of the layby, this is the matter where CC Cllr KB will be lobbying further.

CC Cllr KB left the meeting

HDC Cllr MH presentation can be found under Agenda reports.

• **Annual Report by Parish Council** – Chairman Cllr PC presented a report. Full slides on the presentation can be viewed on the website under Agenda reports.

- **Annual Reports and updates:**

- **Buckden Parochial Charities - Alms Houses** – In the absence of Joe Greenway, Cllr JT noted that pre-application for the new Alms houses is taking an extremely long time to process by HDC. The matter needs to be agreed on as how Trustees wish to proceed.

Report and Annual Accounts 2023 can be viewed on the website under Annual Assembly Agenda reports section: <https://buckdenpc.org.uk/annual-assembly-2024/?ee=1>

- **Village Hall Trust, Chairman Matt Beldam, report attached, please see Appendix 3**

- **Neighbourhood Watch Buckden, report by Richard West** – Terry Hayward read out the report on behalf of Richard West, please see Appendix 4

Opportunity for residents to raise any issues and to meet with Councillors and presenters.

A Resident raised matter re speed of traffic on Church Street, suggesting installing flashing signs. It was explained that speed checks are being carried out in that area to educate people and collate data.

A resident explained that Longhall Road is 'rat run' and needs attention. It was explained that at the moment BPC cannot get any new locations added for speed checks as those need to be agreed by Police who are looking to employ a new Police Coordinator.

Meeting finished at 9.06pm

Date:

Signature:

Appendix 1

Good evening, everyone. We would like to thank Anne Howell-Jones for inviting us to this meeting.

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My name is Jo Hall, and my colleague is Janet Thomas, we are Multi Scheme Administrators and committee members of Huntingdonshire Neighbourhood Watch Association (HNWA).

You may have seen **our article in the latest edition the Buckden Roundabout magazine.**

The Association was formed November 2022 and is now a registered charity. The committee includes members of the community and local councillors and looks after **200 + NHW schemes within Huntingdonshire.** As MSAs, we have been **granted access to a set of NHW Scheme management tools** to oversee more than one NHW scheme. (We do adhere to GDPR act 2018).

There are **6 Associations** in total, **with Huntingdonshire and Peterborough** being the **largest.** **Cambridgeshire Neighbourhood Watch Association** covers the **whole police force area of Cambridgeshire**, which sits **almost as a parent of the 6 associations.**

6 Assocs = Cambridgeshire / East Cambs / Fenland / Huntingdonshire / Peterborough / South Cambs

Since the formation of the ASSOC, quite a few people have told us that ‘they felt isolated & no-one from NHW had been in contact with them’. Janet and I decided that we would change this, and we always do a personal visit to coordinators. Eliminating the feeling of ISOLATION and letting them know that we are there if they have any questions.

Buckden has an active NHW scheme with 56 members and 24 ‘suggested’ members waiting to join. **Mr Richard West is the coordinator** and I have recently been in contact with him about the scheme.

Richard is having to step back from his role as coordinator for the time being and has given me **his permission** to ask if **anyone would be able help** and take over the coordinator (or become **deputy** coordinator). If anyone is interested, could you please see me at end of meeting for further info or contact me via jo.hall@hnwa.uk

We thank you for listening and are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Appendix 2

Flood Advisory Group

Starting with a slightly downbeat note, when it comes to flood prevention action, the Parish Council has no legal powers or obligations to undertake flood prevention works at all. Which in one respect is a good thing – it would undoubtedly cause a significant increase in the precept if we did.

Having said that, the Parish Council can be, and is, an effective pressure group, liaising with both the District Council and County Council. We also must thank Martin Hassall for the very active role he has undertaken in this respect.

What the Parish Council does divides into 2 parts. Three of us hold an informal remote meeting about once a month with Hilary Tandy of the Lead Local Flood Authority (the County Council) to discuss flood issues with her and agree actions to be taken, both by her and us.

This has been a very positive relationship and Hilary has been really helpful. She has continued to put pressure on Bloor Homes over the attenuation pond at Long Hall Road.

She has also put pressure on HDC in regard to the flooding on Taylors Lane, to encourage HDC to clean the culvert at the High Street.

Currently, she has instigated a report from specialist contractors regarding the risks of flooding in the village, with particular emphasis on Taylors Lane. This is a preliminary desk top study. The

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first draft of it has been received and she is now reviewing it. We hope that she will let us have an extract of the important parts of it, although it is not intended for publication.

Once it is finalised, this will be followed by a physical inspection of risk areas. We had hoped this would be in March or April, but as so often, it has taken longer to do the initial report than expected. It is hoped the physical inspection will be in June or July. We anticipate that the Parish Council will be invited to be there as well, possible, as some residents.

The purpose of this is to identify what actions, if any, can be taken to reduce the problem of flooding in the village, particularly in the most vulnerable areas.

The other thing the County Council has done is to supply a shed for the flood equipment and to fund the purchase of more equipment. The Parish Council has also funded the purchase of two more pumps.

The second part of what the Parish council does is the Flood Advisory Group itself.

The Group has, as you would expect, been very active over the winter. I am pleased to say that the Group has expanded with the recruitment of several Flood Wardens. The Parish Council thanks all those Wardens for their active help and participation in our meetings.

The main flood problems have been on Taylors Lane, east of the A1, though storm Babet did cause some flooding to the west as well.

The flood equipment has been in use more than once and I am sure the residents would want me to thank the many volunteers who, in the middle of the night, helped to keep the house at the end of Taylors Lane safe.

We do now have a flood "hotspot" schedule, which we have passed on to the LLFA.

We considered whether we need to have an "evacuation and emergency accommodation" plan. However, the likelihood of flooding being so severe that residents need physical help to leave their homes if necessary, seems very small. Asking the village hall or, for example, the Methodist Hall, to keep a supply of beds, bedding and food for such an occasion seems unrealistic given the cost. It is probably unnecessary as well, since in the past, those who have had to move out of their homes have been able to find accommodation themselves. We have to accept there is a limit to what we can do.

To sum up, the Group has made a lot of progress. Climate change means that what were classified as one in a hundred year events are now happening regularly. We will continue our efforts to ensure the District and County Councils take all necessary action to reduce the risks of flooding of property and to help residents when flood events do occur, as much as we can.

Appendix 3

BVHT Annual Update May 2024

The trust is comprised of twelve volunteers, a hall manager and cleaner and we rely entirely on income generated from the hire of the hall, various meeting rooms and income from our tenants and those clubs which use the field.

Any improvement to the hall and the surrounding areas, can only be conducted from grant awards due to costs.

The financial year April 23 to March 24 has seen an improvement in the finances of the trust, compared to the previous year.

We reviewed our income and expenditure at the beginning of 2023 and decided to increase our hire costs by 12.5% in April 23 and again in March 24 by 3%

During this period, we have seen wage cost rises over 9.8% as we pay a living wage to our hard-working staff. Energy costs remain a significant monthly cost, but we have now signed new contracts which will substantially reduce energy costs from Nov 24.

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Insurance costs for the hall rose significantly in 2023 and again in 2024 to nearly £4k per year.

We also incur a significant ground maintenance cost each year, currently around £9,000. Without assistance in funding from BPC it would prove difficult to maintain 11 acres of field and the lake.

We've been unable to secure a replacement caretaker during this time and therefore are reliant on trustees volunteering to open and close the hall. This is a part time position: if anyone in the village would be interested.

It pleasing to note that have had several regular corporate bookings, along with weddings, christening, Panto, Cat Show as well as our long-term hires which include, exercise and dance classes, railway club, WI to name a few.

Our largest tenant, Village Hall Club, has had a successful trading year and therefore have been able to repay £6,500 of back rent owed. They have also agreed to an increase in their monthly rent. This had not been reviewed for 10 years.

Some of the key highlights of the year:

1. Purchase of a new sit on mower to replace the ancient one we had at a cost of £28,000.
2. Conversion of the charity to CIO status – We are now a limited company.
3. Audit of standards and passing Hallmark 2 status.
4. Introduction of the Village Club to BPC with a view to allow younger village members access to the club and use of facilities – free pool each Sunday from 6pm
5. A strong working relationship with BPC which includes regular meetings and aligning our strategy with that of the BPC.
6. Securing of an FCC grant for £34,000 of which BPC match funded 11%, £3.7k, to replace the footpath between the pavilion and the lake as this does not meet current standards.
7. Application to HDC for a biodiversity grant of £8K (through to second round) awaiting a site visit.
8. Green impact programme: grants of £5K applied for to allow investment in energy efficiencies (e.g. LED)
9. 5 Year strategy plan for upgrades to the hall and reduce our carbon impact.

Planned for this year:

1. Painting of the double fire doors on the main building.
2. Transfer of the assets of the trust into the CIO
3. Upgrade of our Website and on-line payments
4. A421 Road works fund – BPC leading a grant application of £35K to upgrade the hard standing play area.
5. Solar Aerators for the lake to prevent the building up of green algae.
6. Finalise the playgroup's new lease.
7. Conduct a valuation survey for insurance purposes so we are not underinsured.
8. Install a hearing loop in the Millard Room.
9. Apply for Hallmark 3 Status
10. Continue to apply for grant funding for improvements to the building and reduce carbon impact such as LED, additional Solar with battery backup, loft insulation.
11. Improvements to the lake area subject to funding being available.

Finally

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In the last 3 years, we have applied for, and received, grant funding £566,000. The preparation of these grant applications are time consuming and require a considerable amount of personal time and effort from trustees who work full time. I would like to thank Cynthia Ayers, Sue Ashwell and Caroline Underwood who have all worked tirelessly preparing these applications.

Appendix 4

Note: The report being obtained.