

*Minutes of an ordinary meeting of Burghclere Parish Council held on
2nd March 2020 at 7.30pm at the Portal Hall*

Present: Cllrs R Carrow (Chair), A Crowley (Vice Chair), B Canning, S Whiting,
G Morton, I Collins

A Wason and J Richardson (Co-opted as Cllrs under item 4)

J Letsome (Clerk), Borough Cllr Izett (from item 8 to item 13), C Saint

1. Apologies

2. Declaration of members' interests for this meeting

There were none declared.

3. Confirm the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 3rd February 2020

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 3rd February 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Councillor Vacancy

The Clerk reported that she had been advised by electoral services that no requests for an election had been received from parishioners with regards to the 2nd vacancy, they would confirm the outcome formally the following day when the four week notice period had ended. Therefore this left 2 casual vacancies to fill.

Two expressions of interest had been received from potential Councillors – Amanda Wason and Jacob Richardson. They were invited to introduce themselves and provide an overview of their background, connection to the Parish and reasons for their interest in becoming Cllrs. It was unanimously agreed that they should both be accepted as Co-opted Cllrs.

Action: Clerk to arrange for new Cllrs to complete the forms –
Declaration of Members Interest and Declaration of Acceptance of
Office.

5. Elect new representative for Earlstone Common Trust

It was agreed that Cllr Carrow would become the Council's 3rd representative on the Earlstone Common Trust – joining Cllrs Canning and Morton.

6. County Councillor Report

There was no report as County Councillor Thacker was not present.

7. Parishioners' open time

None.

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8. Chairman's comments

Cllr Carrow reported that:

- a. He had shared details of the South & South East in Bloom competition to both Burghclere & Newtown WI and the Horticultural Society.
- b. An informal meeting of the Pinder Recreational Trust was required to discuss matters relating to the Trust's finances/IT/works, it was agreed this would take place on 19th March at 4pm.
- c. Thames Water (TW) had been unable to attend arranged meetings to discuss Harts Hollow, but had informed him that they felt there to be no problems with either the pipes or pumps. Cllr Carrow had informed TW that a problem with effluent running into local streams had previously resulted in Thames Water receiving a fine. Although he acknowledged the cause was different, pollution was coming from TW's systems and he would have to share this information with the Environment Agency if no dialogue or action was forthcoming.

Cllr Carrow shared a report that had been produced in 2012 on the flooding problem on Harts Lane and Breachfield, which highlighted the responsibilities of the residents in Breachfield regarding keeping the water courses clear.

Following discussion it was agreed that Cllrs Carrow and Richardson would try to identify where the problem lay and identify an appropriate solution. It was also noted that the owners of the houses in Breachfield should be encouraged to make themselves aware of their responsibilities with regards to keeping the water courses clear.

Cllr Izett asked to be kept informed. Cllr Carrow emphasised the importance of reporting flooding to Thames Water as soon as it was identified.

- d. Cllr Carrow had received a box containing old documents relating to the Parish Council, most of which did not require retention and had been destroyed.
- e. B&DBC had provided a copy of an emergency plan that had been produced by Burghclere Parish Council in 2012. It was agreed that Cllr Carrow would work with Cllr Richardson to produce a revised plan for presentation and approval at a future meeting.
- f. The Parish may be required to respond to the Coronavirus outbreak and Cllr Carrow felt that this should be in line with government guidance. It was agreed that hirers of the Portal Hall should be made aware that bookings may need to be cancelled in line with any future guidelines, however booking fees would be refunded.
- g. Cllr Carrow remained keen to progress the Parish Council's involvement with some of the initiatives taking place in the Borough around Environmental Action. Cllr Izett confirmed that B&DBC had declared a climate emergency and had committed the Borough to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

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- h. Cllr Carrow suggested that the formation of a Portal Hall working group should be considered as a more efficient alternative to the current ad hoc arrangements. After discussion the work involved in management of the hall was recognised and that it would need to be reviewed in the future.

9. Borough Councillor's Report

Borough Councillor Izett reported that the Council Plan 2020 to 2024 and Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Update 2020/21 to 2023/24 were adopted by council on 27 February 2020. The plan outlines a number of key priorities, including a commitment to provide additional funding for community safety patrol officers with the aim of providing better coverage for the more rural areas. The Borough Council had also made protecting and enhancing our environment a priority, including making a commitment to becoming a carbon zero council by 2025.

Borough Cllr Izett also:

- encouraged the Parish Council to report dangerous potholes.
- confirmed that HCC were going ahead with the introduction of a charge of £5 for non Hampshire residents using Hampshire recycling facilities. There was an expectation that West Berkshire would do the same, but discussions were ongoing in the hope this could be prevented.

10. Proposed Merger with Newtown Parish Council

Cllr Carrow explained that should this proceed it would require a Community Governance Review to be undertaken and shared two documents with further information. He was also awaiting legal advice from B&DBC. He noted however that this was a Newtown initiative with many issues still to be considered,

While no decision was required at this stage, he requested Cllrs opinions: for, neutral or against, which he would then feedback to Newtown Parish Council. Cllrs views were mixed; a number in favour, some neutral and one or two not in favour, although there were no strong opinions voiced. It was agreed that Cllr Carrow would respond to Newtown Parish Council to explain say Burghclere PC was generally content for them to pursue the initiative and provide more information.

Action: Cllr Carrow to respond to Newtown Parish Council

11. Planning applications received since 3rd February 2020

There were none for discussion.

12. 18/00778/OUT Carlton Harts Lane Burghclere RG20 9JN

Cllr Carrow reported that the application would be considered by the Development Control Committee on 11th March and that he had registered an interest in speaking. Excusing the two newly co-opted Cllrs, he asked if all councillors still objected to this planning application. Opinion remained unanimously against the proposal. The LPA's viewing panel would be undertaking a site visit on 6th March.

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13. Neighbourhood Plan Update

Cllr Carrow read the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group report:

“The Independent Examiner’s 2-week consultation period ends at 5 p.m. on Thursday 5 March. We do not expect to see representations until after this time. The Examiner will then review these and complete her work shortly afterwards.

Once her report is finalised, B&DBC and we will amend the plan with her recommendations. It will then come before the Qualifying Body (Parish Council) for agreement to go to local Referendum. I expect this to happen at April’s meeting, following which B&DBC Electoral Services will take over and undertake the necessary preparations. Working backwards, the Plan has to be agreed at a Full Council Meeting. The next one would be at the end of July, which would suggest that any local Referendum should be held around the beginning of June.”

14. Documents for review and agreement

The Clerk had previously circulated the following documents that were due for review,

- Standing Orders
- Risk Assessment
- Financial Regulations
- Asset Register

It was agreed that she would draft amended versions of these documents, based on model documents and information provided by NALC and HALC, these would be presented in the April meeting for further consideration before formal approval in May.

Action: Clerk to draft amended documents and add as agenda item for April.

15. Lengthsman update

On discussion it was agreed that:

- The Clerk would complete the work schedule for 11th March, requesting grass cutting.
- Burghclere Parish Council wished to continue their involvement with the lengthsman scheme in 2020-21, provided that it continued to be funded, and were content to remain in the North-West Hampshire cluster. No requests to change the proposed schedule would be made.

Action: Clerk to submit work schedule and to confirm continued involvement in lengthsman scheme.

16. Website/IT Progress Report

Cllr Crowley reported that he was making progress towards developing a more coherent approach to the multiple websites covering the village so that a more professional image was presented. On discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Crowley would prioritise improvements to the Portal Hall website to reflect the various recent changes.

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17. Footpaths report

Cllr Carrow spoke to the report “Footpaths report and the Ramblers Association ‘Don’t Lose Your Way’ campaign” attached as Appendix 1.

18. Future Fundraising and Grant Application

It was agreed that Cllr Crowley would compile a list of initiatives and invited Cllrs to share their suggestions, this list could be used to identify potential funding sources. Cllr Richardson offered to assist.

19. Accounts

The following payments were presented for approval.

Budget Section	Date	Details	Cheque	Amount
Expenditure				
Salary/PAYE	02/03/2020	F Knott - Litterwarden	SO	£390.00
Salary/PAYE	02/03/2020	J Letsome - Salary	2569	£545.00
Courses/Admin	02/03/2020	J Letsome - Expenses	2569	£87.44
Courses/Admin	02/03/2020	HALC - J Letsome Training	2570	£102.00
Other payments	02/03/2020	HJ & AJ Whiting - Hedge Cutting	2571	£300.00
Salary/PAYE	02/03/2020	F Knott - PAYE	2572	£85.20
Subscriptions	02/03/2020	Eva Akhurst - Parish magazine subscription	2573	£4.00
Other payments	02/03/2020	Pinder Recreation Trust - Grass Cutting	2574	£1,044.00
Other payments	02/03/2020	Pinder Recreation Trust - Pre School Grant	2575	£250.00
				£2,807.64

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The Clerk reported that:

- A bank reconciliation had been completed to 14th February 2020 showing a balance in the Treasurers account of £ £11,508.02.
- The balance in the Business Bank Instant Account on 9th January 2020 stood at £6,801.55.

20. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that:

- A letter had been received from a Parishioner and member of Burghclere & Newtown WI requesting approval to the flower holders at the war memorial with new stones and inserts.
They had also requested the approval of the War Memorials Trust who had responded, raising concerns and queries, but that the decision laid with the Parish Council. It was agreed that Cllr Canning would make enquiries regarding Listed Building Consent.
- In preparation for the internal audit in May she had commenced identifying work that would need to take place to meet the recommendations made in the 2019 audit. She shared the report with Cllrs and updating them on progress to date.

Action: Cllr Crowley to update Parishioner on outcome of war memorial discussion.

21. Annual Assembly date and Location

Following discussion it was agreed this would be held on 18th May in the Portal Hall.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.50pm.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 6th April 2020.

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Appendix 1
20200302-Footpaths report and the Ramblers Association
'Don't Lose Your Way' campaign

Many thanks to Kevin Bailey, Miggie Bruce and Sandra Whiting who, under the guidance of Gemma Clinch, Community Engagement Ranger from HCC's Countryside Service made excellent progress on cutting back the overgrown part of footpath 040/503/4 (photo attached). The final stretch will be tackled later in March.

Thanks as well to Maggie North, who drew my attention to the 'Don't Lose Your way' campaign being run by the Ramblers Association. This aims to identify once-used footpaths that have been forgotten, overlooked or potentially lost before the cut-off date of 1 January 2026 for the inclusion on the Definitive Map. Further research is required to prove lost mapped paths were public rights of way. The Ramblers Association have a very good Q&A at <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/dont-lose-your-way-2026/faqs.aspx>.

I subsequently spoke with Harry Goodchild (HCC Map Review Manager), who explained that in the 1950s after various court cases, the responsibility for pulling together a detailed record of footpaths etc was devolved by Local Councils to parishes. This was the first time a requirement had existed to log where people could walk. Different parishes took different approaches; some were assiduous, others were less diligent, and some may have been influenced by the interests of local landowners. We should be grateful for our Councillors at that time, who have done such a good job in our parish.

Older OS maps demonstrate the existence of old routes and so are a good starting point. The Ramblers website allows comparison of a modern OS map with an old map, one grid square at a time. It should be noted however that back in the 19th century the OS added a disclaimer stating even if a footpath or track was shown on the map it was not necessarily a public footpath.

What can we or the Ramblers do? The Ramblers will clean up their website data based on the efforts of those who have logged in, carried out a comparison and identified and marked old routes. They will then conduct a verification exercise with 2 independent volunteers plus a further check. Although How and When has not yet been confirmed, the Ramblers will work with local volunteers to prioritise routes. They are keen to focus on those that add real value to the existing network, rather than trying to put back every lost path. These include resolving dead ends, completing circular routes, creating better connections and adding routes in areas without off-road walking opportunities.

At present it is not possible to see the Ramblers Master Map. Once someone has made the comparison between old and new grid squares and submitted it, that grid square is greyed out and cannot be accessed. Much of Burghclere is now so shaded.

What happens next? Individuals can either work on their own, as has been done and continues today, through gathering evidence and submitting it to the County Council as a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO). Or, based on contact with the Ramblers, a group might be formed to do this. They should list and add all the sources of supporting information (thinking about the narrative) and the landowner should be informed.

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HCC will carry out a review, investigate further and will ultimately make a recommendation. They will serve a notice on a landowner and will also write to other sources for information such as the Ramblers Association.

Stakeholders may not be keen. Landowners may appoint land agents to contest an application. In some cases a public enquiry might be held if oral evidence is needed.

As you can see this is a long process, involving much research; not dissimilar to a neighbourhood plan! Dominic Tooze of the Ramblers DLYW Team has provided several local Ramblers contacts with whom I have corresponded and can offer advice if required, including what DMMOs have been applied for recently (none in this parish). Unless circumstances change I would not invite the Parish Council as a body to undertake this work but would ask that we agree this is a worthy initiative and, where feasible, support endeavours by interested parishioners to reinstate lost paths within the parish. The initiative Cllr Geoff Morton has initiated to develop a footpath or bridleway N from the Tot Hill roundabout is slightly different but would follow a similar route in getting approval. One consideration is to consider how this might form part of a longer North-South route.

I have been told that one group has been advised that if a path - in their case that follows the line of the A3 - is allowed to open, HCC says it cannot be shown on the OS map as a PROW because it is on Highways England land directly alongside the carriageway. Only the carriageway itself can be shown. The path would therefore not be 'advertised' to non-locals. It is worth bearing in mind and seeing whether West Berks would be more amenable in getting OS recognition.

A book was recommended: 'Restoring the Record' (2nd edition) Phil Wadey & Sarah Bucks (see: <http://www.restoringtherecord.org.uk/buy.htm>). It may also be available from local libraries.

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