

**Minutes of the Meeting of Bradfield Parish Council held on Tuesday 7th January 2025
at 7.30pm in Bradfield Village Hall Committee Room, Bradfield Southend.**

Present: Cllr. K. Dearing (Chair)
Cllr. G. Allen
Cllr. G. Allnutt
Cllr. K. Bishop
Cllr. A. House
Cllr. S. O'Reilly
Cllr. T. Wale
Cllr. B. Wyatt
District Cllr. MacKinnon
Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk)
Two members of the public were present.

1. **Public Forum.**
- 1.1 **Christmas Lights.**

Approximately 123 houses were displaying lights over the Christmas period. The majority of these were on when the judge was driven round to see them all. This year, in addition to first, second and third places, there were three light displays which were commended.

Donations at Cripps Farm raised just over £1,000 for charity.
2. **Apologies.**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr. Balsdon.
3. **Declarations of Interest.**

There were no updates to the Register of interests.
- 3.1 **Declaration of Interest in Agenda Items.**

There were no declarations of interest in any agenda items.
4. **Approval of Minutes of the BPC meeting on Tuesday 3rd December 2024.**

The minutes of the BPC meeting held on Tuesday 3rd December 2024 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.
5. **Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere (for information only).**
- 5.1 **Overgrown Hedges on Southend Road.**

The hedge on Southend Road, to the west of Heath Road has been cut back. Hedges on Cock Lane and Hungerford Lane have not been cut.
- 5.2 **Broken off Speed Repeater Signs.**

The 30mph speed repeater sign on Southend Road, by New House / Cranleigh House has been replaced. The repeater sign opposite Cripps Farm has not.
- 5.3 **Councillor Profiles.**

Councillors were reminded to write profiles to go on the website.
6. **Planning Applications**
- 6.1 **Planning Applications on which BPC has been consulted by WBC:**
- 6.2 **24/02637/HOUSE – Kings Copse House, Southend (Bucklebury Parish).**

Conversion of loggia to enlarge kitchen.

It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application.
- 6.3 **24/02806/HOUSE – West End House, Tutts Clump.**

New pitched roof and rear extension to existing garage.

It was agreed that BPC has **no objection** to this application subject to the garage remaining ancillary/incidental to the house and not being let or rented out.

All

- 6.4 Planning Decisions taken by WBC:
- 6.4.1 **23/01040/FULMAJ – Walnut Tree Cottage, Ashampstead Common (Ashampstead Parish).**
Application for a single-storey side garage extension.
 BPC **objected** to this application, which was **refused** by WBC, but has been **approved on appeal**.
- 6.4.2 **24/01981/FUL – St. Andrew’s School.**
Provision of new car and minibus spaces on grass grid surface.
 BPC **supported** this application which has been **approved** by WBC.
- 6.4.3 **24/02130/CERTE – Heron’s Farm, Buckhold.**
Application 00/57562/ADD was approved for Re-positioning and enlargement of approved dual purpose indoor riding arena and agricultural store and associated hay store and school on 18th September 2000. The applicant, Miss M Culling carried out works on the building’s foundations on 23/12/2004. The application is therefore extant as a material start has been made.
 BPC made **no comment** on this application which has been determined as **lawful** by WBC.
- 6.5 Enforcement Issues.
- 6.5.1 **Shipping Container at the Old Traveller’s Rest.**
 The shipping container, which had been in place for just over a year, has been removed.
- 6.5.2 **Applecroft.**
 District Cllr. MacKinnon reported that WBC Enforcement will inspect the garage/carport over the next two weeks and confirm whether the garage doors are still in situ in the roof of the garage.
7. District Councillor’s Report.
- 7.1 Closure of Ashampstead Road in 2025.
 District Cllr. MacKinnon reported that he has had a meeting with representatives of Bradfield College about the closure of Ashampstead Road and discussed the impact it will have on residents and businesses who use it.
 The work being carried out on Army House will have no commercial benefit to the College. The Army House is a listed building which is in a poor condition with the risk of tiles/chimneys falling on to students, staff and members of the public walking near the building.
 The scaffolding will support a temporary roof structure over the building and will overhang the road, which requires traffic regulations to come into effect which determine that the road must be closed during working hours.
 District Cllr. MacKinnon explored the option of whether the work could be delayed (Buscot Hill having already recently been closed for a considerable period of time due to work on College buildings). Given the state of the building and the risk it poses, the work is urgently needed. The duration of the closure cannot easily be reduced due to the bat roosts which exist in the roofs and the restrictions which are therefore imposed by Natural England.
 It was questioned whether it might be possible to have a scaffolding tunnel over Ashampstead Road, allowing use by smaller vehicles. Cllr. O’Reilly agreed to do some research on a possible tunnel and report back to District Cllr. MacKinnon.
 Whilst Back Lane and Mariner’s Lane are not the official diversion route, they will be used by local people. Both roads are essentially single track with passing places, however, most of the passing places are full of large potholes posing a risk of damage to vehicles. It was suggested that scalpings be put into the potholes (when the weather is dry), making the routes more usable during the closure.

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- 7.2 WBC Member's Bid.
The WBC Member's Bid for the restoration of the telephone box in Bradfield and a new defibrillator has been submitted and is being considered by WBC.
- 7.3 Local Government Reorganisation.
A white paper was published on the 16th December proposing unitary authorities across the country of at least 500,000 residents and elected mayors covering areas of approximately 1,500,000 residents.
West Berkshire Council is likely to have disappeared by 2028 and been replaced by one of three different options:
1. A completely new Berkshire unitary authority covering all of Berkshire (approximately 1,000,000 residents).
 2. An authority covering West Berkshire, Wokingham and Reading.
 3. An authority covering West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse.
8. **Finances.**
- 8.1 Bank Reconciliation dated 7th January 2025.
The Clerk had circulated a bank reconciliation dated the 7th January 2025 prior to the meeting. This reconciled the balance to the Treasurer's Account (current account) on the 3rd December 2024 with a balance of £19,512.63. Once all cheques and credits have cleared, the balance in the Treasurer's Account will be £16,912.36. The balance in the Business account on the statement dated the 27th December 2024 was £73,782.83.
Cllr. Bishop verified the finance report against the bank statements.
- 8.2 List of payments and receipts.
The following payments have been made since the last meeting:
- | | |
|--|---------|
| West Berkshire Heritage Forum | £50.00 |
| Salaries and chair's allowance (December 2024) | £702.85 |
| Emptying of Tactical bins (December 2024) | £81.60 |
- 8.3 Budget for FY25/26.
The budget for FY25/26 was approved with a total expenditure of £25,764.15. It was agreed to ring fence a total of £50,000 for development of the hall, including £17,643 which was paid to the Village Hall in FY23/24 to match fund a Good Exchange grant. These funds come from CIL funds received as a result of development in the parish.
- 8.4 Precept for FY25/26.
It was agreed to raise a precept of £23,500 for FY25/26, this being an increase of £500 on FY24/25.
- 8.5 Clerk's Salary.
Payment of the Clerk's salary for January 2025 was approved.
9. **Highways.**
- 9.1 Anti Speeding measures in the Parish.
Cllr. Allnutt had produced and circulated a report of a meeting at which he met with Cheryl Evans and Gareth Dowding, both WBC officers about speeding in general in the parish and specifically, along Southend Road, in Bradfield and on Cock Lane near the Primary School. Cllr. House thanked Cllr. Allnutt for his work on speeding and the report.
It was agreed that the report would be considered in its entirety at the next BPC meeting.
- 9.2 Parking on the Footway.
It was reported that vehicles are parking such that they are obstructing the footway along Southend Road. This makes is very much more difficult for pedestrians to use the

footway safely, and particularly anyone who is blind. A note will be included in the NewLink report, requesting that people do not obstruct the footway when parking.

10. **Clerk's Report.**

10.1 **Update on "Bradfield-pc.gov.uk" Domain.**

Hugofox have now registered the "bradfield-pc.gov.uk" domain. The website can be accessed using both the ".gov.uk" domain and the original "bradfieldpc.org" domain. Email continues to only be received on the "bradfieldpc.org" domain.

11. **Environment.**

11.1 **Installation of Commemorative Plaques.**

The plaques will be installed when confirmation has been received from Bradfield Village Hall Committee on the exact location where the plaques are to be installed.

11.2 **Installation of replacement Benches.**

This is waiting for Bradfield Village Hall Committee to make arrangements to transport and install the benches in their new locations at the Play Area and the Village Field. It is understood this will be done when the weather has warmed up.

12. **Bradfield Village Hall (BVH).**

12.1 **Bradfield Village Hall Development Committee (December).**

A meeting took place on the 9th December with the Development Committee, the Village Hall Trustees and BPC to discuss how the public meeting went.

A meeting of the Development Committee took place on the 16th December, when actions were prioritised and scheduled into the New Year. Initial leads for fund raising and communications were identified. The Business Strategy (increasing hall usage and income) will be led by the Village Hall Trustees. A project lead was identified for the main development aspects of the project, excluding the toilets, kitchen, drains, MUGA and playground which can be funded from alternate sources.

BPC has agreed to allocate space on the parish noticeboards to the project and it was agreed that BPC would pursue the parameters, mechanics, timescales and costs of running a Public Works Board Loan.

13. **Reports from any other meetings.**

Cllr. O'Reilly reported that there is a Village Hall meeting on Wednesday 8th January?

14. **Round table comments.**

14.1 **Grant Applications.**

It was agreed that applications for grants from BPC should be received by the end of February. The NewsLink article will communicate this to residents.

14.2 **Drains on Southend Road.**

Work has been completed to raise the curb of some properties on the East side of Southend Road, this has stopped water from the road flowing over the curb and down drives towards homes.

However, the issues with the drains by Stretton Close and outside Southend Cottages has not been resolved.

14.3 **Surface Flooding on the Cricket Field and the Village Field.**

The rain has caused surface flooding on the Cricket Field, which has flowed through onto the Village Field.

14.4 **Layby on Southend Road, opposite Flora House.**

The hedge behind the layby, opposite Flora House has been allowed to grow out over the pavement, completely obstructing it. It needs to be cut back to the centre line.

14.5 **Bradfield Village Hall.**

Questions were asked about the mechanics and cost of a referendum.

It was suggested that encouraging the Village Hall improvements as a Community Project, rather than hall improvements might receive better engagement.

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Concern was raised about any funds raised as part of a Public Works Board Loan not being used as per the agreed project.

There was also a query about whether BPC could fund some of the work, gift it to the Village Hall and reclaim the VAT.

14.6 Potholes.

It was noted that the repairs to some potholes are failing, and the potholes need more repairs.

14.7 Common Hill.

It was reported that the road signs on Common Hill are slipping into the field again.

14.8 Union Road.

The bank to the east of Bournefield Farm is starting to come down again into the sunken gully

15. **The meeting concluded at 9.40pm.**

BPC meeting: Tuesday 4th February 2025 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, Bradfield Village Hall.

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