

Bucknell Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th May 2023

in the Church

Councillors present	Cllr Chris Wells (CW) [Chair Cllr Derek Hedges (DH) Cllr James Alcock (JA) Cllr Mrs Emma Evans-Roberts (EER) Cllr Alexander Bowden
Apologies received	Richard Johnson
Members of the public present	There were no members of the public present

05.23.01 Apologies had been received from Cllr Richard Johnson

05.23.02 **Public Participation** - There were no members of the public present.

05.23.03 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held in 2022 were not available as the parish council was undergoing a period of change and no minutes were taken.

05.23.04 Bucknell Parish Council Chairman's Report – 2022-2023

The last year was a challenging one for the council. We have seen some major challenges both within the council itself and issues that could significantly affect the village.

Within the council, we began the 22/23 year in an interesting position. Our clerk at the time had resigned and we had no chairman in place from the prior year. From a governance perspective this

was challenging as it was down to the council and just three Councillors to get itself back into compliance and do so rapidly.

Thankfully, our previous clerk continued to support the council through the start of the year. This meant, with the engagement of an Internal Auditor in May, we were able to get the financial records

updated and the AGAR submitted on time, as well as well as identify a range of corrective actions

that needed urgent attention. Over an 8 month period, we were able to get things in order and this

is reflected in the internal audit report for the year. There remain a couple of outstanding minor points to work on through the coming year.

We are also very fortunate to have recruited a very experienced clerk to the council – I have no doubt that Cathy will be a great asset to us and already we are benefitting from having her / you with us. Welcome Cathy and, in advance, thank you!

In terms of other progress made, we continue to have the familiar standing issues to work on (for

example Thames Water and Ardley where we have a watching brief). Traffic and parking have

been

two regular topics over the years; most recently we have been able to secure the 20mph limit in the village as part of OCC's broader county-wide plan, however the issue of compliance and enforcement of this new limit will undoubtedly become the next issue. For parking, we consulted the village about introducing white line parking bays on Manor View, to both provide parking indicators to pub patrons and to act as a periodic chicane – but residents were not in favour of this approach, so those plans have been stopped.

Putting all of what I have said to one side, our biggest existential crisis loomed over us in 2022 as developers made the highly speculative planning application to brush under the carpet the existing Cherwell Plan and build new houses as part of the proposed Hawkwell development right up to the front door of Bucknell. Be in no doubt that those plans would result in Bucknell being coalesced into

Bicester. As a parish, we owe a huge degree of thanks to those that have led the “stop hawkhell”

campaign and driven the unprecedented number of objections to the hawkhell plans (over 330 objections at the last count). Not wanting to single anyone out, those involved know who they are –

thank you to everyone who has played a part – I know that it has taken a lot of time and effort to do

what has been done so far. The fight continues.

In conclusion, thank you to everyone on the council – all councillors have been elected this year –

thank you for volunteering and giving your time to help make Bucknell the community it is. We are

almost at our full complement – just one vacancy now – and in my view, we are in the best shape

we can be to continue our work into the next year and beyond.

Chris Wells; Chairman – Bucknell Parish Council

Signed **Chair**

Dated