

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Buscot Parish Council
held on Wednesday 21 May 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Jo Scanlan (Chairman), Dan Billington, Cath Parris and Helen Woof.

County Councillor Bethia Thomas, District Councillor Katherine Foxhall, Charles Leather and Andy Gunn (National Trust).

Public 4.

1. Election of Chairman

Councillor Jo Scanlan was elected Chairman for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

Councillor Dan Billington was elected Vice-Chairman for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Lizzie Hall, District Councillor Viral Patel and Keith Assirati-Wilkie (National Trust).

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Billington reminded the meeting of his previous declaration that although he was employed by the National Trust his membership of the Parish Council was in a personal capacity.

5. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 March 2025 were adopted and signed as a correct record.

6. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising to report.

7. Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked her fellow councillors, the Clerk, County Councillor Bethia Thomas, District Councillors Katherine Foxhall and Viral Patel, Christian Walker and Keith Assirati-Wilkie (National Trust) for their support during the last year. She also thanked Greg and Shirley Wheeler for keeping the Parish Council informed on all matters relating to the river, Matthew Scanlan and Maurice Long for maintaining the village hall clock, Chris Leniec for

maintaining the play area and Emma Goodwin for auditing the Council's year end accounts. She referenced another successful car boot sale and Christmas carols around the Christmas tree. She welcomed Bishopsland Educational Trust to Hills Yard, noting the positive impact that both the staff and students had made to the village. Flooding had remained a constant issue for the village and Buscot Wick. New speed limits had been introduced through the village from the A417 junction towards the river and through Buscot Wick. The reduction of the speed limit on the A417 through the village was awaiting implementation. The recent installation of the Speed Indicator Device on the A417 was a welcome addition to improving road safety and she thanked the Clerk and Mark Scanlan for installing the device. Finally, she congratulated County Councillor Thomas on her recent re-election to the County Council.

8. Public Speaking

Romney Pargeter asked whether there was a Neighbourhood Plan for Buscot or something similar to help promote local businesses and services for the area. The Clerk advised that there was not a Neighbourhood Plan as this generally related to planning policies that supported residential development plans for a parish, which was not appropriate for Buscot. The National Trust representatives advised that the Trust would be happy to discuss this matter further to understand what further support it could provide to support local businesses.

Guy Jordan referred to the paved footpath from the village towards the church, which was difficult to navigate in places due to overhanging vegetation causing an obstruction. The Clerk undertook to report via Fix My Street and contact the Trust to request that its tenant's cutback any overhanging vegetation.

Clerk

9. District and County Councillors Reports

The District Councillors and County Councillor's reports had both been circulated in advance of the meeting. District Councillor Foxhall referenced the ongoing discussions regarding Integrated Care Boards and health provision for residents in those parishes bordering Swindon. She also noted that fly-tipping continued to be an issue across the District and highlighted the importance of reporting any incidents. A Homelessness Strategy was being developed and a public consultation was underway. Local Government re-organisation was a major issue being addressed by the District Council at present, which had required a huge resource input to coordinate ongoing preparatory work. Finally, she asked to be advised of any issues locally with domestic and commercial garden waste collections.

County Councillor Thomas thanked the Chairman for her congratulatory remarks following her re-election to the County Council and looked forward to serving Buscot for the next four years. She advised that, following the election, the County Council now had a Liberal Democrat majority. Finally, she advised that she would welcome a "Walk around" the parish to fully understand all the issues facing Buscot and prioritise them for action.

10. Traffic Management

As reported earlier in the meeting the Speed Indicator Device had been installed on the A417. An additional solar panel would be ordered, so that only the SID display would need to be moved every 6-8 weeks. The need to cutback vegetation around the SID pole outside 1 Buscot had been reported via Fix My Street. The Clerk reported that Coleshill PC was unable to lend its handheld traffic speed device and so he had been advised to establish a Community Speedwatch group for Buscot, to enable the parish to undertake its own traffic speed surveys. An application to Thames Valley Police had been submitted.

11. Flooding

Andy Gunn provided an update on progress with Buscot Flood Alleviation scheme, which was ready to be submitted for planning approval. There were currently some issues which needed to be addressed with the County Archaeologist regarding land surveys. Discussions with the farming community were ongoing. He advised that the scheme, once approved, would be subject to a phased implementation dependent on funding and planning requirements. The Clerk suggested that a public meeting be organised by the Trust to present the scheme to parishioners.

The Chairman asked whether the Trust would be providing any training/advice to tenants on installing the flood barriers to ensure that this was undertaken correctly to protect properties. Mr Leather advised that tuition had been provide on delivery of the barriers but he undertook to consider organising a teach in session at the village hall on both installation and storage of the flood barriers. Greg Wheeler reported that the Environment Agency had recently announced a recruitment freeze, which would have a major impact on the operation of locks/weirs along the Thames, given that there were at least 15 planned staff retirements over the next year. Industrial action was planned.

12. National Trust

A report on Trust activities had been circulated prior to the meeting. Mr Leather provided the following updates:-

- Completion of flood reinstatement works following the flooding at the end of November, including the fast tracking of the works to the village tea room.
- Property maintenance works had been completed on repairing/replacing rotten garage doors on the main garage block in Buscot.
- Due to legislation changes around recycling a general waste bin had been ordered from Biffa to be located by the barn for the summer.
- Gravel works to the main car park had commenced on 19 May.
- Funding approval had been received to refurbish six properties across the estate, including 33 Malthouses.
- Works required to the village hall clock to be assessed by the end of June.

The Chairman asked for the actual date that the general waste bin would be delivered. Mr Leather undertook to advise. The Chairman also sought clarification on the use of the village hall kitchen and toilet facilities by Bishopsland during the week. Mr Leather confirmed that Bishopsland had been granted use of the village hall facilities during the daytime but that the hall was available for public hire during the evenings and at weekends. For Buscot parishioners that would be at the discounted hire rate. Mr Leather also undertook to investigate the fly infestation at the hall.

Mr Leather

Mr Leather

13. Correspondence

Nothing of note to report.

14. Village Events for 2025/26

The Annual Car Boot Sale would be held on Sunday 3 August. The Clerk undertook to organise the advertising and the A Boards to be displayed at the entrance to Buscot Park. Councillor Scanlan would organise the food and ask Adam Symonds to transport the tables and chairs. Councillor Woof to check on availability from the church to assist with catering and car park duties.

15. Finance

Receipts and payments since the last meeting were noted.

16. Annual Accounts 2024/25

(a) Annual Accounts 2024/25

The Clerk presented the accounts for 2024/25, noting that balances stood at £4520.69, an increase of £1017.46 on

the previous year. Emma Goodwin was thanked for auditing the accounts and it was agreed to give her a £50 gardening voucher in appreciation.

RESOLVED

That the accounts for 2024/25 be received and approved.

(b) Annual Audit 2024/25

The Council approved the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements in respect of the Annual Audit Return 2024/25 and agreed to declare the Council exempt from a limited assurance review.

17. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 17 September 2025.

18. Any Other Business

None.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.