

BASILDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Basildon Parish Council held on the 14th May at the Village Hall in Upper Basildon.

Present: Mr Parsons (Chair), Mrs Greasley, Mr Chadwyck-Healey, Mr Gidden, Ms Barnes, Ms Cox, District Councillor Ms Coyle, Mr Greasley (Clerk).

Apologies: Mr Couchman, Mrs Kilgour

No members of the public attended the meeting:

1.OPEN FORUM

A question around planning was raised with the District Councillor.

2.DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were raised.

3.MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 14th April having been circulated to members in advance of the meeting was signed by the Chairman.

4.PLANNING

The meeting reviewed the following applications:

25/00842 Telecommunications Mast, Beale Park – Various Installs

It was noted that this was approved by West Berkshire Council in advance of the meeting. The Parish Council therefore had no view.

25/00915 7 Wakemans – New Garden Room

The Parish Council had no objections subject to the views of neighbours.

25/00898 Sakura, the Triangle – New first floor window

The Parish Council had no objections subject to the views of neighbours.

25/00692 The Cottage, Reading Road – Install electric charging point

The Parish Council had no objections subject to the views of neighbours.

25/00639 Summer Place, Newtown – New detached garage

The Parish Council had no objections subject to the views of neighbours.

25/00625 Garlands, Pangbourne Road – New house in front garden.

The Parish Council reviewed the application and voted by majority to have no objections subject to the views of neighbours.

Confirmed Decisions

25/00493 9 Emery Acres, Garage Conversion. WBC Approved, PC No Objections

25/00842 Telecommunications Mast (Beale Park), WBC Approved, PC No View

25/00338 Holly Cottage, Beckfords, Rear Canopy in Garden, WBC Approved, PC No Objections

25/00181 3 Beckfords, extension, WBC Approved, PC No Objections

25/00167 Maple Corner, Maple Lane, Garage Conversion, WBC Approved, PC No Objections

25/00058 Hurstmere, Pangbourne Road, Garage Conversion, WBC Approved, PC No Objections

24/02100 Land Adjacent Walnut Tree Cottage, Change of Land Use – WBC Refused, PC Objected

5. GENERAL ITEMS

Insurance for the Parish was discussed and concluded. The Clerk confirmed that obtaining quotes continues to be challenging with two companies declining during this year's follow up. However, the Council received a quote of £926 versus a renewal of £689 (against a previous cost of £612) and voted to accept the lower figure from CAS Insurance. The Clerk informed the meeting that the cover had been slightly amended to include protection of the higher reserves that the Parish Council currently has and will now make the necessary arrangements.

Councillor Barnes has continued to look into speedwatch signs and has found signage and fixings that can be purchased online. Details will be sent to the Clerk and Chairman.

The Chairman updated the meeting on the village website and a move to a new supplier. As part of the next stage, Councillors were asked to consider what the new website should cover; this will be followed up via email from the Chairman.

Councillor Gidden opened the discussion on the Parish Plan refresh questionnaire and took the meeting through work to date. The Chairman thanked Councillor Gidden for his work to date and the group then proceeded to comment on the current draft questionnaire with the following observations made:

It was felt that there were too many questions, and this may limit the amount of returns received. It was suggested that the survey should be trimmed as far as possible and look to ask residents at a high what they'd like to see the Parish Council stop / start doing and where they'd like to see changes or improvements made across the Parish.

The clerk referred to the 2015 refresh and noted that similar issues had been encountered, however, at the time a large questionnaire had been required to meet Parish Plan Refresh standards. The Clerk will follow up with various sources and gain an understanding of what is being asked in other local Parishes in a bid to see if a much shorter survey can be circulated.

The Chairman will look into defibrillator options for Lower Basildon and will work with Councillor Barnes as required.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

The District Councillor delivered the following update.

Local News

New speeding measures

The works that Sarah discussed with Gareth Downing, WBC's principal Highways Engineer, are included in the works programme for this financial year, as is the proposed new speed limit for Streatley Hill (reduction from national speed limit to 40mph).

The Grotto

The vacant post of conservation officer has now been filled and I have been in touch with her about the Grotto. She is making inquiries as to whether the property is still in the hands of receivers or has been sold. Once she knows who the current owners are she will be writing to them threatening enforcement action, I have pointed out how long we have all been pushing for action to be taken and will continue to keep the pressure up!

Road closures

The A329 is due to be closed at Lower Basildon for resurfacing works from 9 June 2025 to 11 June 2025 between 19:00 and 05:00 each day.

'Suicide Lane'

(minor road which goes from Wallingford House directly towards Bradfield)

After an approach from a resident, I organised a meeting with a Highways Engineer at the site and it was agreed that a new “Not suitable for HGVs” sign would be installed at the southern end of the road (At the junction with Ashampstead Road just to the north of the bridge under the M4).

Council wide news

Local plan update

The revised local plan, which has been amended by the inspector, will go before a special meeting of the Full Council on 10 June 2025.

Local Government Reorganisation Update

The Government is looking to reorganise all local authorities into large unitary authorities, as this is thought to be more efficient.

There is a proposal being developed for West Berkshire Council to join the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils into a unitary authority, with the proposed name being Ridgeway Council. As I understand it, the proposal will go to the Government in the autumn and there will be a public consultation on the proposals.

7.FOOTPATHS, HIGHWAYS AND OPEN SPACES

No issues were reported. Ashampstead Parish Council have received assurances from Yattendon Estates that Broom Wood will be tidied following tree felling once the weather improves.

The Clerk informed the meeting that he’d be revisiting the tree survey work for older oak trees in the Parish. This was originally completed in 2015 and highlighted in the region of 25 trees with a trunk circumference of over 4 metres. These trees will be re-visited, photographed and re-measured with data shared and TPO’s raised if required.

8.FINANCE - UPDATES

The following cheques were presented to the meeting:

Cheque No	Payee	Purpose	Nett	VAT	Total
103697	R Greasley	Salary	428.13	0.00	428.13
103698	Tactical FM – c/o Bibby financial	Grass Cutting (cost over 12 months)	288.50	57.70	346.20
103699	Tactical FM – c/o Bibby financial	Monthly bin emptying change	24.83	4.97	29.80
103700	Playsafety	Rospa Inspection	96.00	19.20	115.20
103701	Mulberry Local Authority Services	Internal Audit	357.00	0.00	357.00
103702	West Berkshire Council	Library Support	3416.00	0.00	3416.00
103703	PCC Basildon	Post Office hire	500.00	0.00	500.00
103704	I Parsons	Expenses	3.00	0.00	3.00
103705	Steve Napper	Groundworks for Cycle hub	561.21	0.00	562.21

The Council accepted cheque numbers 103697 to 103705 and the clerk confirmed the direct debit to HMRC and SSE. Account totals were also shared with the meeting.

Councillor Greasley confirmed that the internal audit was now complete and the relevant parts of the AGAR signed off. The key observations of the internal audit were as follows:

Financial control is classed as good with all statements, payments and associated spreadsheets matching exactly.

The website requires an update (currently under discussion and minuted separately) and should have Councillors register of interests and acceptance of office forms uploaded to it.

Two documents needed to be reviewed and approved by the Parish Council as they have a last review date of over one year ago – Council Standing Orders and Council Risks. The Clerk will action both and circulate outside of the meeting.

Other general observations were made and will be implemented over the coming months.

The Chairman placed on record his thanks to Councillor Greasley for her efforts and requested a quick monthly financial summary going forward. This was agreed and will start in June.

Following review of the Internal audit, the Council voted to sign off the relevant external audit forms and submit them. This was completed by the Chairman and Clerk as required.

OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting concluded at 9pm. The next meeting will be on the 10th June