

An Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 10th August 2026, at 7.30pm in the Peter Gooch Room, The Pavilion, Englefield Road, and was attended by the following:

Chair: Cllr. Clifford

Councillors Present: Cllr. Pert, Cllr. Feguson, Cllr. Paul, Cllr. Coker & Cllr. Church.

Others In Attendance: Two members of the public.

Minutes: Di Hughes – Operations Manager/Clerk.

MINUTES

Agenda Item	Minute	Action Agreed	Vote (If required)
1.	<u>Apologies</u> Cllr. Hopcroft, Cllr. H.Hopkinson, Cllr. A.Hopkinson, Cllr. Seto & District Councillor Macro	-	-
2.	<u>Declaration Of Interest & Dispensations</u> None.	-	-
3.	<u>Minutes Of The Previous Meeting.</u> - It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2026 be approved as a true record. The meeting's closing time was confirmed as 8.55pm, and the minutes were amended accordingly. - Website: Due to a family emergency, Cllr. Seto was unable to attend the meeting. He had, however, provided his notes regarding the quotation for the new website. In principle, he considered both the quotation and the proposed web provider to be suitable. Cllr. Seto also suggested that the Council consider a rebrand alongside the development of the new website. Members were asked to review Cllr. Seto's notes in advance of the next meeting. The matter will be discussed further at the September meeting, when both Cllr. Seto and the Assistant Clerk will be present. Cricket Club Agreement: Members were asked to review the document available on SharePoint and to provide any comments, amendments or suggestions. The document will be reviewed further at the September meeting.	Clerk to ensure this matter is added to the September agenda. Clerk to ensure this matter is added to the September agenda. Clerk to move this file to the September meeting file.	Proposed: MP Seconded: SZ All in favour

	location and that the team was currently experiencing capacity issues. The residents showed the Council photographs of some vehicles and asked whether the Council could offer any advice or assistance in resolving the matter. The Chair advised that the matter was outside the Council's direct jurisdiction but confirmed that the Council has established contacts with West Berks Council & Thames Valley Police. The Chair agreed that both matters would be reported to the relevant authorities to see whether this could assist in resolving the situation. The Chair thanked both residents for attending the meeting and advised that they were welcome to stay and observe the remainder of the meeting or leave if they wished. The residents chose to stay for the remainder of the meeting.		
5.	<u>Monthly Reports</u> - District Cllr. Alan Macro circulated a written report to the Council in advance of the meeting. - Cllr. Clifford had no update to provide, as there was very little activity during the summer holidays. - The Clerk had provided a weekly update by email in advance of the meeting and had nothing further to add. - Cllr. Church wished to make Members aware of concerns raised by residents regarding vibrations at the development site off Hoad Way/High Street. The Chair asked Cllr. Church to raise this matter under the Planning agenda item later in the meeting so that the Council could discuss the matter and take any necessary action. Cllr. Coker wished to make the Clerk aware of concerns he has with some of the play equipment. He advised that he had spoken with the Maintenance Operatives. The Clerk advised Members that the matter was already being monitored and that an email had been sent to the contractor responsible for supplying and installing the equipment.	Clerk to chase this matter and report back to Council.	-
6.	<u>Planning Matters</u> All planning matters were attached as an appendix and sent to the members in advance of the meeting. These are also available for members of the public to view on the TPC website. Planning applications:		

	26/01543/FUL – Units 1-3, Markham Centre, Station Road The Parish Council has no objections to this application. 26/01409/FUL – Wickcroft Farm, Pangbourne Road The Parish Council has no objections to this application. b. Planning decisions, appeals, withdrawals & correspondence received: 26/01293/COND – Lakeside, The Green West Berks Council hereby APPROVES the details submitted in relation to the condition. Land Bounded by Hoad Way, M4 and High Street, Theale Concerns were raised by residents regarding vibrations arising from building works taking place on the site. Residents reported that they could feel their homes moving or shaking and expressed concerns about the potential impact on their properties. c. A resident had contacted Cllr. Clifford to ask the Council to support a request for assistance with planning enforcement regarding the Falcon Pub, High Street. The matter has since been resolved, and the resident no longer wished for it to be discussed by the Council.	Clerk to submit response to WBC. Clerk to submit response to WBC. It was resolved that, in the first instance, the Clerk would contact Adam at SP Broadway to raise the concerns. If a satisfactory response is not received, the Clerk will contact West Berks Council's Planning Enforcement team.	Proposed: MC Seconded: SC All in favour Proposed: MC Seconded: SC All in favour Proposed: MC Seconded: PC All in favour
7.	<u>Finance & Accounts</u> All finance reports were circulated to Members in advance of the meeting as an appendix. These documents are also available for members of the public to view on the TPC website. a. Grounds & Building Maintenance Contract: Council are still awaiting a quote from G N Maintenance, a preferred supplier, for a one-year grounds and building maintenance contract. This matter was deferred in both June and July and is now becoming time-critical, as no provision has yet been agreed for the contract commencing on 1st November 2026. As the anticipated value of the contract is expected to exceed £10,000, Council agreed that the Clerk should obtain three additional quotations for the work. Cllr. Coker will contact G N Maintenance to confirm whether they are still intending to submit a quotation for the contract. b. Noted.		Proposed: PC Seconded: SF All in favour

	c. Council authorised the invoices for payment. It was agreed to renew the Vision ICT contract for one more year and give notice next summer. d. No internal transfers were made during the month. However, Members agreed to transfer £90,000 from the Unity Savings Account to the Hinckley & Rugby Savings Account, which offers a higher interest rate.	Cllr. Paul & Cllr. Clifford will authorise the payments and the bank transfer.	Proposed: MC Seconded: SC All in favour Proposed: MP Seconded: SF All in favour
8.	<u>Correspondence Received</u> Correspondence where relevant is being sent to members via email. Noted.	-	-
9.	<u>Members Bid</u> Council agreed to contribute the additional £2,155 required for the new speed awareness sign, which will be located on The Green as you come off the roundabout from the A340 into the village, before the new housing developments.	Clerk to advise WBC & District Cllr. Macro of this decision and to make the payment to WBC.	Proposed: SF Seconded: MC All in favour
10.	<u>Scoping Consultation on the New West Berkshire Local Plan</u> Council discussed the matter at length and raised several concerns. Members agreed that the Council should submit a formal response to West Berkshire Council. See Appendix for the full response.	Clerk asked to formulate and submit a response addressing all the concerns raised by members.	Proposed: BP Seconded: MP All in favour
11.	<u>Communication & Engagement Review</u> The Clerk had prepared a document for Members to review in advance of the meeting, outlining how the Council currently communicates with residents and promotes events. This document will be available to the public with the minutes. The Chair took the opportunity to ask the members of the public present at the meeting about their experience of communication with the Council and whether they had any suggestions for improvement. Suggestions included: • Holding drop-in sessions at John Cumber Hall. • Using the @followers function on Facebook to help ensure that residents see the Council's posts. • Not paying for social media advertising, as this was felt not to be effective. • Exploring the possibility of advertising on buses. Other suggestions from Members included: • Producing an annual newsletter, in a printed format, listing all Council and community event dates for the coming year. Councillors could assist with the distribution of the newsletter. • Creating an Instagram account and linking it to the Council's Facebook feed.	It was agreed that the Clerk would progress the "quick wins", including using the @followers function on Facebook and creating an Instagram account. Council agreed to produce an annual newsletter this year, including all 2027 event dates. The Clerk will investigate the costs of advertising on buses. The Clerk will ask Councillors whether they would like to hold drop-in sessions and, if so, will coordinate suitable dates and venues.	

12.	<u>Summer Events</u> This item was deferred until September, as all Members of the Community Events & Engagement Committee were on holiday and therefore unable to attend the meeting.	Clerk to ensure this matter is added to the September agenda.	-
13.	<u>Community Hub Feasibility Study</u> - Responses have been received from Theale Village Hall, Theale & Tilehurst Cricket Club and the John Cumber Charity. - The Clerk will thank the stakeholders for their responses and advise them that the next steps are being considered in September, after which Council will provide an update.	-	-
14.	<u>Date Of Next Meeting</u> Monday 7 th September at 7.30pm. The Clerk advised that she will be on annual leave from Friday 28 th August, returning on Monday 7 th September. All pre-read information will be uploaded prior to her leave. The Assistant Clerk will ensure that the agenda is posted and published on Wednesday 2 nd September. Members are asked to submit any agenda items, where possible, by Thursday 27 th August.	-	-

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Chair: Date:

Theale Parish Council Response to the Scoping Consultation on the New West Berkshire Local Plan

Theale Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scoping Consultation on the new West Berkshire Local Plan. The Council considered the consultation at its meeting held on Monday 10th August 2026 and resolved to submit the following comments regarding the capacity of Theale to accommodate further development.

The Council recognises the need to provide new homes and understands the Government's housing requirements. However, when West Berkshire Council recently invited sites for consideration, Theale Parish Council did not put forward any sites because it considers that the village is already at, or very close to, its capacity and that existing infrastructure and services are under significant pressure.

The consultation states that West Berkshire Council will work with partners to address infrastructure issues. However, until the existing pressures on infrastructure and services are addressed, Theale Parish Council does not believe that Theale has the capacity to accommodate further significant development.

The following points and concerns were raised at the meeting in relation to the Local Plan and future development of Theale.

Housing Development & Capacity

- Consideration should be given to the significant number of new dwellings that have already been built, are under construction or have planning permission in and around Theale in recent years.
- There is very limited land remaining for further development within the village without placing additional pressure on existing infrastructure, services, and facilities.
- The remaining green spaces within and around the village should be protected.
- Theale is a designated Conservation Area, and any future development should respect and protect the character, appearance, and heritage of the village.
- Theale should continue to be recognised as a village rather than being treated as a small town for the purposes of planning and future development.

Landscape & Environmental Considerations

- Theale borders areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the impact of any further development on the surrounding landscape and environment should be carefully considered.
- Further development should not result in the loss of important green spaces, landscape character or the rural setting surrounding the village.
- The cumulative impact of existing, committed and any proposed development should be taken into account when considering the future capacity of Theale.

Infrastructure & Services

There are significant concerns regarding the lack of investment in local infrastructure and services, which has not kept pace with the considerable level of development in and around Theale.

Examples of infrastructure and services that are already under pressure, or which are considered to have insufficient capacity, include:

- Sewerage and wastewater infrastructure: There have been incidents of homes flooding, and concerns remain regarding the capacity and operation of the wastewater infrastructure. Thames Water regularly attends the pumping station adjacent to Lambfields.
- Public transport: The Jet Black bus service currently stops operating in Theale during the early evening, meaning there is no convenient public transport connection between Reading and Newbury during later hours.
- Highways and planning enforcement: There is concern that there has not been a visible increase in enforcement resources to deal with the additional demands arising from development, including highways and planning matters.

- Healthcare: Residents can experience lengthy waiting times for appointments at Theale Medical Centre, raising concerns about whether local healthcare provision has sufficient capacity to support further population growth.
- Policing: There has not been a corresponding increase in officers within the Thames Valley Police Neighbourhood Policing Team to respond to the additional demands associated with population growth and reported anti-social behaviour.

Overall Concern

Theale has already experienced considerable development, while local infrastructure and services have not increased at a comparable rate.

Any future allocation of housing should therefore take into account the cumulative impact of existing, committed, and proposed development and should demonstrate that sufficient infrastructure, services, and facilities will be available to support any additional population.

Housing Development in Theale – Supporting Information

To support the above response, the following information sets out the scale of housing development that has taken place, is currently underway or has been approved in and around Theale.

When the Lakeside & Croudace developments are completed and fully occupied, Theale will have had 508 additional dwellings built or under construction within the last 10 years.

Site/Road Name	Number of Dwellings	Status
Red Lion Pub	8	Completed & occupied
Cumber Place	32	Completed & occupied
James Butcher House	21	Completed & occupied
Cloister Mews	1	Completed
Englefield Road	2	Completed & occupied
The Botanicas	15	Completed & occupied
Croudace	104	In progress; some occupied
The Lakeside	325	In progress; some occupied
Total	508	

In addition, West Berkshire Council has granted planning permission for a further 72 apartments at Forum 1, Station Road, and 4 apartments at Crown House on the High Street, opposite the Co-op. This brings the total number of new dwellings that are either completed, under construction or have planning permission to 584.

There is also outline planning permission for approximately 100 dwellings at Whitehart Meadow. If this development proceeds, the potential increase in housing would therefore be approximately 684 additional dwellings.

The scale of development already taking place in Theale demonstrates that the village has made, and continues to make, a significant contribution towards meeting housing requirements.

Theale cannot be expected to accommodate further significant housing development without substantial investment in local infrastructure and essential services. Existing pressures are already evident, particularly in relation to roads and traffic, parking, policing, GP appointments, pharmacy capacity, and other community services.

Further development should therefore only be considered alongside a clear and deliverable commitment to the infrastructure and services required to support both the existing and additional population.

Conclusion

In summary, Theale Parish Council considers that Theale has already made a significant contribution to housing delivery and should not be expected to accommodate further significant housing growth unless and until existing infrastructure and service pressures have been demonstrably addressed.

The Council believes that the capacity of the village, the cumulative impact of recent and planned development, the availability of infrastructure and services, and the need to protect the character and environment of Theale must all be given appropriate weight when considering future housing allocations.

Theale is a village, not a small town, and there must be recognition of the capacity and character of the village when considering further housing allocations.

Agenda Item 11 - Communications & Engagement Review

This summer, Theale Parish Council hosted the following free community events:

- Sports Day
- Outdoor Cinema Night
- Village Fete
- Beer & Live Music Festival

Following these events, a number of comments were received on social media from residents who were unaware that the events were taking place. This has prompted a review of how the Council communicates with and engages residents across the parish.

Councillor Clifford has suggested that social media algorithms may prevent some residents from seeing the Council's Facebook posts and has asked the Council to consider whether alternative communication methods should be explored, including the potential use of paid social media advertising to boost event posts.

The Parish Office currently promotes events and activities using the following communication channels:

- Hard copy posters displayed on noticeboards at the High Street, Theale Village Hall, John Cumber Hall, Theale Medical Centre, Theale Library and Trafalgar Court.
- Emails to local schools requesting that information is shared with parents via ParentMail and Class Charts. This is monitored by the Parish Office to ensure information is distributed promptly.
- Emails to Holy Trinity Church requesting that information is shared with the church congregation via email and, where appropriate, displayed on the notices screen during Sunday services.
- Emails to local organisations, including Carebus, Cumber Place, Theale Tigers, Theale Brownies, Theale Scouts, Theale Cadets and Englefield Estate, asking them to share information through their own communication networks, including email and WhatsApp groups.
- Dedicated Facebook event pages containing information specific to each event.
- Scheduled Facebook posts using the Meta Planner to promote both individual events and the associated event pages.
- Large vinyl banners displayed in prominent locations, including outside the Co-op and on the railings outside Castle School on Church Street.
- Correx signs positioned at key locations around the village, including the Recreation Ground, Play Park, North Street and on lamp posts.
- Road closure and advance warning signs on the main highways within the village where appropriate.

Members are invited to review the Council's current communication methods and consider whether there are additional or more effective ways of ensuring information reaches as many residents as possible.