

An Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 5th October 2026, at 7.30pm in the Peter Gooch Room, The Pavilion, Englefield Road, and was attended by the following:

Chair: Cllr Paul

Councillors Present: Cllr Coker, Cllr Church & Cllr Hopcroft.

Others In Attendance: Blaire Brodie, Assistant Clerk & District Councillor Macro

Minutes: Di Hughes, Operations Manager/Clerk.

MINUTES

Agenda Item	Minute	Action Agreed	Vote (If required)
1.	<u>Apologies</u> Cllr Clifford, Cllr Pert, Cllr Ferguson, Cllr H.Hopkinson, Cllr A.Hopkinson & Cllr Seto	-	-
2.	<u>Declaration Of Interest & Dispensations</u> Cllr Coker declared that he knew one of the parties involved in one of the planning matters.	-	-
3.	<u>Minutes Of The Previous Meeting</u> a. Council was unable to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Cllr Hopcroft stated that the minutes were incorrect and that Council had not agreed to postpone Theale in Bloom in 2027 due to extreme weather conditions. The Clerk considered the minutes to be an accurate record of the discussion, while Cllr Paul understood that Theale in Bloom would not be taking place in 2027. Cllr Coker could not recall the decision, and Cllr Church had not been present at the meeting. Cllr Hopcroft requested that the wording "<i>It was therefore agreed that the competition would be put on hold for 2027</i>" in paragraph three of item 14 be removed. The Clerk will review the wording of the minutes considering the discussion and the matter will be brought back to Council for further consideration and approval at its next meeting.	Clerk to review and amend the draft minutes as requested and bring both versions to the next meeting for Council to consider and approve the correct version.	-

	b. The Clerk updated Council on actions from previous meeting. • Still waiting on an adequate response from the School Playground Specialist regarding the Rope Climber • The meet your councillor sessions dates are still to be confirmed. • The draft contract for G N Maintenance has been prepared and is currently being reviewed, with the intention of issuing the final contract by the end of this week. • Pavilion water usage additional information will be provided at the November meeting.		
4.	<u>Open Meeting & Public Forum</u> None.	-	-
5.	<u>Monthly Reports</u> a. District Cllr Alan Macro circulated a report by email in advance of the meeting. He verbally reported that he understood Reading Borough Council to be in the process of requesting a further boundary review, but that Theale and Pangbourne would not be included in the proposed review. b. Cllr Clifford was not present at the meeting. c. The Clerk had provided weekly updates by email throughout the month and provided a verbal update to Members regarding the new bus stops, advertising of events at bus stops, matters relating to BYFL, and the current condition of the football pitches. The Clerk asked members present if they were willing and available to volunteer for the Remembrance Day Parade and/or the Christmas Market. d. Cllr Church reported that there had been a fire at the old Water Works (Thames Water site) over the weekend. He had spoken to the Fire Chief, who advised that beer cans and alcohol had been recovered from the site and that the incident was being recorded as arson. Cllr Church also reported that the railings on a footbridge near Woodfield Way had been vandalised. Cllr Church asked whether the office team was aware of an area of grass on Woodfield Way that had been cut out. The Clerk confirmed that the	- Cllr Coker & Cllr Church have offered to put the poppies up in advance of the 08.11.2026. As these matters had not previously been reported to West Berks Council, the Assistant Clerk logged the faults on the West Berks Council website during the meeting	-

	office was aware of the matter but did not know who had carried out the work or why. The Clerk also confirmed that the land belonged to West Berkshire Council. Cllr Hopcroft advised that he has applied for hedgerow from a Woodlands Trust grant. He plans to plant behind the cherry trees and fill gaps in the community open spaces. The timings for planting are usually Autumn but the current extreme weather conditions may mean that this doesn't take place until the winter. The Clerk was asked by Councillors who live on or near Woodfield Way whether the office was aware of why armed police officers had been seen in the area during the mid-morning of the previous Wednesday or Thursday. The Clerk advised that the office was not aware of any incidents that would account for the police presence.	for both the bridge and the grass.	
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. a. Planning applications: 26/02098/HOUSE – 40 Blossom Lane, Theale No objections. b. Planning decisions, appeals, withdrawals & correspondence received: 26/01738/CERTP – 10 Chestnut Close West Berkshire District Council hereby certify that on the 5th August 2026 the development described in the First Schedule to this Certificate in respect of the land specified in the Second Schedule to this Certificate and edged red on the plan attached to the Certificate, would be LAWFUL within the meaning of Section 192 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. 26/01583/FUL - Unit 7 Markham Centre, Station Road West Berkshire District Council hereby GRANTS PLANNING PERMISSION for the above development in accordance with the plans and supporting information contained within the application. 26/01834/NONMAT - Land Bounded by Hoad Way and M4 and, High Street	Clerk to submit responses to WBC.	Proposed: SC Seconded: MC All in favour

	In pursuance of its powers under the Town and Country Planning act 1990 West Berkshire District Council APPROVES the minor amendment as specified.		
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. No quotes have been received. b. Noted. c. Council authorised all the invoices for payment. d. Noted. e. Council formally received the external auditor report from PKF and considered actions arising. The External Auditor has raised a query regarding the review of the appointed Internal Auditor. We had provided the minutes of the June 2026 meeting, where Council discussed this matter; however, these were not accepted as evidence because the discussion took place after the end of the 2025/26 financial year. The previous minutes for 2023/24 and 2024/25, only record that Council wished to reappoint the Internal Auditor. They do not demonstrate that Council considered the Internal Auditor's impartiality or whether it would be appropriate to appoint a new Internal Auditor. Financially, both the External and Internal Auditor's reports confirm that the Council is financially fit for purpose, met is compliance with regards to Assertion 10 and with no further actions required.	Cllr Paul & Cllr Hopcroft will authorise the payments and the bank transfer. The Notice of Conclusion was published on our website and notice board on the 11.09.2026. The Clerk will confirm that Claire Connell is willing to be the internal auditor for 2027/2028 as per the discussions in June 2026.	Proposed: IH Seconded: SC All in favour
8.	<u>Correspondence Received</u> Correspondence where relevant is being sent to members via email. a. Noted. b. WBC Transport Consultation Plan Englefield Road: The Council supports the proposal, as it considers that it will help improve traffic flow along Englefield Road and enable residents who are not part of the school community to continue their journeys in a timely manner.	Clerk to submit responses to WBC.	Proposed: SC Seconded: MC All in favour

	The Parish Council also considers that the proposal should help reduce congestion on Englefield Road, particularly in the vicinity of the entrance to the Parish Council and Village Hall car park. In recent years, congestion in this area has contributed to minor road traffic accidents and near misses involving pedestrians, particularly school-aged children. The proposal was unanimously supported by the members present at the meeting, with all members voting in favour. c. Consultation on the new West Berkshire Local Plan Integrated Impact Assessment Scoping Report: Council wish to formally respond see attached appendix.	Clerk to submit responses to WBC.	Proposed: MP Seconded: IH All in favour
9.	<u>Removal Of The Mini Recycling Centre</u> This matter was deferred until the November meeting, as Cllr Seto, who made the proposal, was unable to attend the meeting and the pre-read information was not available in sufficient time for members to consider it.	Clerk to ensure this item is added to the November agenda.	-
10.	<u>West Berkshire Council Service Delivery Offers</u> This matter was deferred. An acknowledgement has been received from West Berks Council, but a date for the meeting has not yet been confirmed. They have suggested late October/early November to meet.	Clerk to ensure this item is added to the November agenda.	-
11.	<u>Street Trading Ban</u> After discussion, it was resolved that the Council does not wish for the street trading ban to be lifted. It was noted that the membership of the Council has changed significantly since the matter was last raised with West Berks Council in 2020. Having reviewed the rationale for the ban, which was introduced in 1990, the current Council considers that there is a variety of hot food options available on the High Street and that local traders should be supported. The Council therefore does not wish for the ban to be lifted. It was also noted that, when the ban was introduced in 1990, Theale and Holybrook were one parish council. In 2020, Theale and Holybrook Parish Councils were established as separate parish councils, and Holybrook Parish Council has since expressed a wish for the ban to be lifted within its parish.	Clerk to update WBC on this response.	Proposed: MC Seconded: MP All in favour

	The Council is aware that members of the local community often request a fish and chip shop in the village. It was noted that the street trading ban does not prevent a future fish and chip shop from operating from a shop premises in the village, subject to the usual planning and other relevant permissions.		
12.	<u>Christmas Light Contract</u> The current Christmas lights contract will terminate when the 2026 illuminations are taken down. Four companies were invited to provide quotations for the 2027–2029 contract. Two companies declined to quote; details are included in the attached appendix. SparkX provided two detailed quotations, and Festival Lighting provided three detailed quotations. Council discussed the current service provided by SparkX and considered the quotations received. It was agreed that SparkX is the preferred supplier and that the Council wishes to proceed with Option B. The design and colour of the motifs will be decided at a later date.	Clerk to advise SparkX that they are the preferred supplier and that we wish to proceed with this works as per their quote.	Proposed: MP Seconded: IH All in favour
17.	<u>Date Of Next Meeting</u> Monday 2nd November 2026 @ 7.30pm.	-	-

The meeting closed at 9.04pm.

Chair: Date:

Consultation on the New West Berkshire Local Plan Integrated Impact Assessment Scoping Report

Theale Parish Council met on Monday 5th October 2026 and discussed this matter under Agenda Item 8.

The baseline report describes Theale's historic function and strategic designation rather than its current capacity to accommodate additional growth. Theale's position within the settlement hierarchy should not be interpreted as evidence that the village has capacity for substantial further development.

The village has experienced significant housing growth in recent years, together with major commercial, warehouse and distribution developments. The employment assumptions appear to rely on historic office provision and do not adequately reflect the loss of office floorspace through residential conversion.

Theale is also constrained by the surrounding countryside, its proximity to the National Landscape (formerly AONB), existing transport pressures and limitations in local infrastructure and services. The baseline assessment should therefore be updated to reflect current conditions and the cumulative impacts of recent development, rather than relying primarily on historic strategic designations.

1. Theale's designation does not reflect its physical constraints

The report appears to rely on Theale's status as a District Centre and employment hub. However, this does not automatically mean that the village can accommodate significant further development. While Theale performs an important service and employment role, it remains a village with tightly constrained boundaries. Its capacity for future growth is limited by surrounding environmental, landscape and infrastructure constraints.

2. Employment assumptions may be out of date

The report appears to place significant emphasis on Theale's historic office market. However, in recent years:

- A number of office buildings have been converted to residential use.
- The employment land base has reduced.
- The balance between jobs and housing has changed significantly.

The baseline assessment therefore appears to overstate the current scale of office employment within Theale and does not adequately reflect recent office-to-residential conversions, which have altered the village's economic profile.

3. Lack of available development land

A key consideration is whether sufficient suitable land actually exists to accommodate further growth. The report identifies Theale as a strategic location but does not appear to sufficiently assess the availability and suitability of land within and around the village.

Theale is largely built out and opportunities for further expansion are extremely limited. Any assessment of future development capacity should take these physical constraints into account.

4. Landscape and National Landscape considerations

Although Theale itself is not wholly within the National Landscape, development around the village can affect the setting and character of protected landscapes.

The Parish Council considers that the assessment gives insufficient weight to the relationship between Theale and the adjoining National Landscape (formerly AONB), including the need to protect landscape character and setting when considering the potential for further development.

5. Cumulative development pressure

The cumulative impact of development is particularly important when considering Theale's capacity for further growth. The issue is not simply whether individual developments are acceptable when considered in isolation, but the combined effect of multiple developments over a relatively short period.

The baseline assessment does not appear to adequately acknowledge the cumulative effects of recent growth, including significant new housing developments, intensified logistics and distribution uses, and the associated increase in traffic and pressure on local infrastructure.

6. Infrastructure pressure

Theale residents frequently raise concerns regarding the capacity of local infrastructure and services, including:

- A4 congestion and traffic levels;
- GP capacity;
- Pharmacy capacity;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Pressure on local services and facilities; and
- The loss of village character resulting from continued development.

The Parish Council considers that the report places considerable emphasis on Theale's accessibility but does not sufficiently consider whether local infrastructure and services have the capacity to accommodate further growth.

Conclusion

In summary, the Parish Council considers that the baseline information used within the assessment is out of date and does not adequately acknowledge the significant changes that have taken place within the Parish in recent years. These include two substantial housing developments, significant commercial and warehouse development, changes to the employment land and office base, and the continuing pressure on local services and infrastructure.

It was also noted that the Parish has not yet had sufficient time to understand the full impact of the new warehouse development on Hoad Way, including its potential effects on the local community, traffic levels and infrastructure.

The Parish Council therefore considers that the baseline assessment should be reviewed and updated to reflect the current position in Theale, including the cumulative impacts of recent and ongoing development, before assumptions are made about the village's capacity for further growth.

To support this response, the Parish Council has also reattached its formal response to West Berkshire Council from August 2026 in relation to the scoping Consultation on the New West Berkshire Local Plan.

Supplier	Website	Location	Specification	Cost Per Year	Total Cost - 3 Years	Additional Information
SparkX - Quote A	https://sparkx.co.uk/	Buckinghamshire	This quote includes 20 pole mounted motifs on the High Street. Installation, removal and storage. We would <u>retain</u> the existing lights, which were purchased new in 2023. The existing street furniture was purchased in 2024 and has a five-year warranty. The contractor would carry out an electrical health check in 2027 and only charge for any issues identified that require repair or replacement.	£4,285 + VAT	£12,855 + VAT	Additional optional extra £225 +VAT for High Street Christmas tree lights
SparkX - Quote B	https://sparkx.co.uk/	Buckinghamshire	This quote includes <u>brand new</u> decorations! 20 pole mounted motifs on the High Street. Installation, removal and storage. The existing street furniture which was purchased in 2024 and has a five-year warranty will stay but the contractor would carry out an electrical health check in 2027 and only charge for any issues identified that require repair or replacement.	£4,410 + VAT	£13,230 + VAT	Additional optional extra £225 +VAT for High Street Christmas tree lights

Festive Lighting - Quote A	https://www.festivelighting	Somerset	This quote is for 30 pole mounted Nostalgic Noel motifs on the High Street for £5,714 per year. Installation, removal & storage is an additional cost of £2,790 per year. Retaining our existing street furniture which is under warranty until 2027.	£8,504 + VAT	£25,512 + VAT	See attached brochure for more information on this supplier and their quote.
Festive Lighting - Quote B	https://www.festivelighting	Somerset	This quote is for 30 pole mounted Starlight Magic motifs on the High Street for £3,564 per year. Installation, removal & storage is an additional cost of £2,790 per year. Retaining our existing street furniture which is under warranty until 2027.	£6,354 + VAT	£19,062 + VAT	See attached brochure for more information on this supplier and their quote.
Festive Lighting - Quote C	https://www.festivelighting	Somerset	This quote is for 30 pole mounted Nordic Starlight motifs on the High Street for £4,860 per year. Installation, removal & storage is an additional cost of £2,790 per year. Retaining our existing street furniture which is under warranty until 2027.	£7,650 + VAT	£22,950 + VAT	See attached brochure for more information on this supplier and their quote.
Field & Lawn	Declined to quote stating that they could not get close to the cost we are currently paying or to the other quotes already received.					
MK Illuminations	Declined to quote as they purchase their stock from SparkX so would be more expensive and cannot offer a comparable quote.					