

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BERINSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL held on Monday 2nd September, 2024 at 7.15 p.m. in the Church Hall, Wimblestraw Road, Berinsfield, Oxon.

PRESENT Councillor S. Scott-Ely Chairman
Councillor P. Bridge Vice Chairman
Councillor Mrs. Beeby,
Councillor I. Bunyan
Councillor K. Chrisp
Councillor T. Eltham
Councillor Mrs. A. Head
Councillor Mrs. A. Jones
Councillor D. Scate
Councillor Mrs. L Sweetland
Councillor A. Woodington

Wendy Foster, SODC Community Development Officer
Edward Whorwood, OCC Tree Officer
Annette Loveland, Clerk to the Council
12 members of the public, including the residents who have volunteered to assist with the Abbey Woods Spinney project.

1. Items raised by Members of the public

a) **Community Development Officer**, Wendy Foster Community Development Officer, South Oxfordshire District Council, introduced herself to the Parish Council and those present at the meeting. She stated that she is involved with the Didcot and Berinsfield Garden Village projects.

b) **Abbey Woods Spinney**. Francesca Pearman informed the Parish Council that she has been responsible for recruiting volunteers to assist with the Abbey Woods Spinney scheme. She believes Abbey Woods Academy and the Pre-school wish to be involved with the Forest School project. Francesca would also like to run independent Forest School sessions in the Spinney area.

c) **Shop and flats located at the junction of Fane Drive and Chiltern Close, Berinsfield**. Residents of Chiltern Close attended the meeting to complain about the furniture and waste which has been deposited at the rear of the premises located at the junction of Fane Drive and Chiltern Close. This matter was reported to the Parish Council at its meeting held on the 5th August, 2024 and a complaint was passed to South Oxfordshire District Council at that time. Staff from South Oxfordshire District Council visited the site, which is privately owned, and the Environmental Health Department will contact the land owner again to ask for the waste to be removed. As the waste is on privately owned land, South Oxfordshire District Council is not in a position to clear it. It is believed that the waste has been deposited by the occupiers of the flats, but South Oxfordshire District Council has not been able to obtain confirmation of this.

d) **Forecourt of shop and flats located at the junction of Fane Drive and Chiltern Close, Berinsfield**. A request was made for the forecourt and layby outside the front of the shop and flats to be tidied up. The area is owned by Oxfordshire County Council and a request for this work to be carried out will be made to them in the first instance.

e) **Hedges obstructing public footpaths.** Reports were made at the meeting about hedges that were overgrown and obstructing the pavement. The Parish Council agreed to report the hedge at 2 Colwell Road to Oxfordshire County Council, who will contact the owner to request that it is cut back from the highway. SOHA Housing will be contacted with regard to cutting the hedge around the Church View flats.

f) **Obstructed pavement, Chiltern Close, Berinsfield.** A report was made about a bag of building aggregate that has been left on the public footpath outside No. 21 Chiltern Close and is causing an obstruction for pedestrians and people using mobility scooters. The matter will be reported to Oxfordshire County Council as the highway authority responsible for footpaths.

g) **Untaxed vehicles in layby, Chiltern Close.** The Parish Council was informed that three untaxed vehicles have been parked in a layby in Chiltern Close, which is classed as public highway. Details of the vehicles have been forwarded to DVLA.

h) **Roman Road to the north of Berinsfield.** A resident attended the meeting to inform the Parish Council that the shrubbery alongside the Roman Road needs to be cut back. The bridleway is now very narrow due to the fields having been ploughed. The Clerk informed the meeting that this had previously been reported to Oxfordshire County Council Countryside Service, who are responsible for maintaining footpaths and bridleways. They had indicated that work would be carried out in July/August. A further request will be submitted to them regarding this matter. Residents also mentioned that the footpath that runs behind the factory units is overgrown. This will also be reported to the Countryside Service.

i) **Berinsfield Health and Wellbeing Committee** Ms. Lilly Jones, Chair of the Committee informed the Parish Council that the sum of £24,999 would be released to Berinsfield Parish Council at some point during September 2024, being the funds for the Health and Wellbeing Grant Scheme that the Parish Council has agreed to administer. At the present time the Parish Council is advertising for two volunteers from the community to sit on the Grants Committee.

j) **Berinsfield Classic Car Show 2025.** Councillor Bunyan informed the Parish Council that the organisers of the Berinsfield Classic Car Show would like to hold the show on the recreation ground on 14th June 2025.

k) **Inconsiderate parking, Crutch Furlong/Fane Drive, Berinsfield.** Councillor Mrs. Beeby informed the Parish Council that vans are being parked in Crutch Furlong in such a way that they restrict access for pedestrians and people using mobility scooters and they are having to go into the road in order to avoid them. The Parish Council agreed to investigate this complaint.

2. **Apologies for absence** were received from Councillor Crawford

3. **Declarations of interest.** There were no declarations of interest in items listed on the agenda for the meeting.

4. **To receive and approve the Minutes and confidential Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 5th August, 2024.** It was AGREED that the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5th August, 2024 should be APPROVED.

5. **To consider planning applications and decisions.**

a) **Planning application P24/S2713/HH.** Single storey rear extension, 28 Wimblestraw Road, Berinsfield OX10 7LZ The Parish Council AGREED that South Oxfordshire District Council should be informed that the Parish Council has no objections to the application.

b) **Planning decision P24/S2449/AG** Land at Wally Corner, Dorchester Road, Berinsfield. Extension to agricultural storage building. The Parish Council noted that South Oxfordshire District Council has given notice that its determination in respect of the notice of intention to carry out development for agricultural or forestry purposes is as follows:-
A formal application for planning permission is required.

c) **Planning decision No. P24/S2138/FUL.** Continued use of land as a container self storage facility for a temporary 7 year period. Berinsfield Breakers Yard, Oxford Road, Dorchester on Thames, OX10 7LY The Parish Council noted that planning permission has been granted in respect of this application.

6. **Abbey Woods Spinney.**

a) **Tree works.** The Parish Council was informed that one quotation has been received by Mr. E. Whorwood from Oxfordshire County Council for the tree works required in the spinney area prior to any improvement works being commenced. The quotation was from South Bucks Tree Surgeons in the sum of £1176.80. The detailed quotation was not available at the meeting for inspection. Mr. Whorwood agreed to forward a copy of the quotation to the Clerk to the Council. The Parish Council AGREED, that subject to receiving the quotation and it meeting with the Parish Council's approval, an order should be issued to South Bucks Tree Surgeons for the tree works, to the value of £1176.80, to be carried out in the Abbey Woods Spinney area.

The Parish Council has received the sum of £9,000 from South Oxfordshire District Council comprised of £6,000 UKSPF funding and £3,000 CIL funding, to be used for the improvement works to Abbey Woods Spinney. The cost of the tree works will be covered by this funding leaving a balance of £7823.20 for any remaining improvement works.

b) **Improvement works.** Quotations have been obtained by South Oxfordshire District Council from three contractors, A & W Grounds, £13,153.54, Oxford Direct Services, £10,905.00 and Leaves of Green £10,000 - £12,000. Leaves of Green have indicated that if the project was run using a volunteer led approach the cost could be reduced to £5,000 - £8,000. The Parish Council considered the information available to them at the meeting and AGREED that a detailed quotation should be obtained from Leaves of Green in the first instance and subject to this meeting with the Parish Council's approval, the improvement works should be carried out using a volunteer led approach under the supervision of Leaves of Green.

7. **UK SPF Funding for Berinsfield. Design and construction of a new pump track. Design and construction of an extension to the existing skateboard park. Repairs to the existing skateboard park.**

a) **Planning application.** The Parish Council noted that additional information has been requested by South Oxfordshire District Council in support of the planning application and therefore the construction of the pump track and extension of the skateboard park will be delayed. Both contractors have confirmed that construction can take place at any time of the year.

b) **Payment schedule – Clark and Kent Construction.** Clark and Kent have asked that the payment schedule proposed by the Parish Council be amended to :-

40%	initial deposit	£39,600
40%	mobilisation	£39,600
10%	week two	£9,900
10%	completion (after handover)	£9,900

The Parish Council would prefer to hold half of the completion funding as retention to be paid after 6 months and it was AGREED that Hendriette Knouws Garden Communities Project Manager should be asked for her opinion about this proposal in the first instance.

8. **Correspondence and Items for Information.**

a) **Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils.** The Parish Council considered the information contained in the agenda regarding the need for the OALC subscription rates to be increased in 2025. The Parish Council's subscription would increase by approximately £50.60, depending on the electorate as at 1st January 2025. It was AGREED that Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils should be informed that Berinsfield Parish Council is in favour of the proposed increase in subscription rates from 1st January 2025 onwards.

b) **Audit of Berinsfield Parish Council's accounts for the year 2023-24. External Auditor's Report and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023-24.** A copy of the AGAR approved by the External Auditor on 17th August, 2024 was circulated to all members of the Parish Council. The comments made by the External Auditor with regard to the Period for Public Rights were noted and relevant action will be taken to ensure that the Return is approved by the Council prior to the Notice being published in 2025.

The comments with regard to the bank reconciliation and the need for additional documentation in support of the intermediate testing, were also noted.

c) **SODC Capital Grant Funding 2024-25. Drainage in the Burial Ground.** The Parish Council had agreed to obtain quotations to install drainage in the Burial Ground to alleviate the problems caused by flooding of the area where the cremated remains plots are located. The criteria for obtaining a grant from the SODC Capital Grant scheme is that projects have to cost a minimum of £10,000 and the Parish Council would have to contribute 50% of the cost of the project. The quotation that the Parish Council would like to accept is for £6450.00 and therefore would not qualify for funding under the SODC Capital Grant scheme. In view of the problems the flooding causes, it was AGREED that Berinsfield Parish Council should use its contingency fund of £5,000 towards the cost of installing drainage and that an order should be placed with the contractor D. Hazell in order that the work can be carried out as soon as possible.

d) **Winter Preparedness 2024-25.** The Parish Council AGREED to inform Oxfordshire County Council that it will not require the free allocation of salt for 2024-25 as it still has sufficient stock from previous years.

e) **Christmas Lights.** The Parish Council noted the information in the agenda regarding the need to replace some of the strings of solar lights that are erected on trees in the village during the festive period. The Parish Council also noted that Plantscape supply solar Christmas trees that can be hung on existing hanging basket brackets. The Christmas trees cost £85 per year and are delivered, hung on the brackets and collected by Plantscape.

It was AGREED that four new sets of 300 LED solar lights should be purchased from the Solar Light company at a cost of £64.99 per set and that 6 solar Christmas trees should be rented from Plantscape for the festive period at a cost of £85.00 per unit.

f) **VE Day 80. 8th May, 2025.** The Parish Council AGREED to join with the organisers of the VE Day 80 project and will light a beacon at the War Memorial at 9.30 p.m. on 8th May, 2025. Further arrangements will be discussed with the Vicar nearer to the time.

9. Statement of Accounts for Payment. It was AGREED that the statement of accounts for payment in September, 2024 in the sum of £12,494.41 should be APPROVED.

10. Bank Statements. The bank statements for August were circulated at the meeting. The balances were noted and the reconciliation for the current account was signed by Councillor Mrs. Sweetland.

11. Items of Report to Chairman.

a) **Tree Planting** The Parish Council has been allocated £1368.00 by South Oxfordshire District Council to replace three Hornbeam trees located on the edge of the recreation ground along Ken Hall Walk and to provide two additional Acer trees along the edge of the new path in the Burial Ground. It was AGREED that quotations should be obtained for the purchase and planting of the trees and that, subject to the cost not exceeding £1368.00, the trees should be purchased and planted.

b) **Damaged dog litter bin.** It was reported that the dog litter bin located on the open space in Fane Drive opposite the entrance to Lodden Avenue has been damaged. The Parish Council will inspect this to see if it can be repaired.

c) **Allotment Hedge, Pritchard Close, Berinsfield.** It was reported that the hedge around the Allotment Site requires cutting. It was AGREED that the Clerk should obtain quotations to carry out the work.

d) **Flags.** Councillor Bridge informed the Parish Council that he would be away for the Service of Remembrance and therefore would not be able to put the flag up. A resident present at the meeting offered to do this and agreed to contact the Clerk in order to make arrangements to obtain the flag and key to the flag pole.

e) **Path from Green Furlong to Lay Avenue.** It was reported that the weeds needed to be removed from the sides of the path. It was AGREED to refer this matter to SOHA Housing who are responsible for the path.

f) **Parish Council meeting, 4th November, 2024.** The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will not be available to attend the Parish Council meeting on 4th November and it was AGREED that Councillor Bunyan should Chair the meeting.

12. Date of next meeting – 7th October, 2024.

13. Confidential item. In view of the confidential nature of the following items, the press and members of the public are asked to leave the meeting.

a) Recruitment of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

