

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BERINSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL held on
Monday 3rd March 2025 at 7.15 p.m. in the Church Hall, Wimblestraw Road,
Berinsfield, Oxon.**

PRESENT

Councillor S. Scott-Ely
Councillor P. Bridge
Councillor F. I. Beeby
Councillor A. Jones
Councillor S. Crawford
Councillor A. Woodington
Councillor K. Chrisp
Councillor A. Head

Chairman
Vice Chairman

Alex Marasco, Clerk to the Council
Councillor R. Bennett (South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire
County Council)
One member of the public

1. Items raised by Members of the Public.

a) Flooding – A member of the public asked for an update on the flooding in Fane Drive at the junction with Kennet Close and Wimblestraw Road. The Chairman provided an update and explained that he had seen inside a manhole that is backed up with debris and other items. It was AGREED that the Chairman, Clerk and this member of the public would continue to share information on any developments. It was AGREED that the Clerk would email the officer responsible for drainage at OCC and copy in Cllrs Scott-Ely and Bennett.

2. **Apologies for absence were received from** Councillors Scate, Eltham and Sweetland.

3. **Declarations of Interest.**

4. **County Councillor's report.** County Councillor Robin Bennett had prepared a written report which had been circulated to all present at the meeting. The contents of the report were noted by the Parish Council.

5. **District Councillor's report.** District Councillor Robin Bennett had prepared a written report which had been circulated to all present at the meeting. The contents of the report were noted by the Parish Council.

6. **To receive and approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd February 2025.**

Cllr Jones proposed that the minutes be approved, Cllr Crawford seconded and it was AGREED that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on February 3rd be approved.

7. **To receive and approve the Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 5th February 2025.**

The Chairman asked if the Parish Council would consider removing the rugby posts to the Recreation Ground during the off season to prevent vandalism. It was AGREED that the

rugby posts will stay in place but this decision be reviewed in the event of further vandalism.

Cllr Bridge proposed that the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 5th February 2025 be approved, seconded by Cllr Jones. It was AGREED to approve the minutes of the Open Spaces committee meeting.

8. **To consider planning applications and decisions received to date (if any).**

a) P24/S3615/FUL - Extension to skatepark and construction of hard surfaced pump track. – Planning permission received.

b) P24/S3847/HH - Application proposal, including any amendments:
Erection of two-storey side extension. (As amended by plan received 26 February 2025). 33B Cherwell Road Berinsfield OX10 7PB. Planning permission granted.

The Parish Council acknowledged these decisions.

9. **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.** To receive an update on the progress of the planning application and any other relevant information relating to the projects.

a) Planning permission for these projects has now been received. The planning permission has come with conditions that need to be implemented. These have been emailed to councillors and are further available upon request.

b) Deposits will be made to the contractors for the skatepark and pump track, after which a start date should be provided.

c) As part of the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, the Parish Council needs to plant eight trees. However, since the Parish Council has already planned tree planting in the nearby area, we only need to plant four additional trees. The proposed location of the additional trees is along Fane Drive, below the cemetery.

It was AGREED that the Parish Council would support the trees being planted in this location.

d) Remaining UKSPF funding has been received.

e) Community Communication – The Parish Council is asked to consider how it would like to communicate the construction with residents in the vicinity of the build area.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would coordinate social media and website announcements when dates for the construction are known. It was AGREED that the Clerk would coordinate a leaflet drop to residents on Lay Avenue to advise of the works.

f) Berinsfield Garden Village Community Development Officer, Wendy Foster, will work in partnership with BPC to plan and coordinate a launch event for each of these facilities, including ongoing engagement activities.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would enquire whether a pre-construction event could be put on to inform residents of the work.

10. **Abbey Woods Spinney.** To receive an update on the progress of the Abbey Woods Spinney scheme and any information arising between meetings.

a) Work to the first phase of the Abbey Wood Spinney has been completed, a gathering space has now been created. The magnifying post is in place and two Scots Pine trees have been planted as per the condition for removal of previous Scots Pine tree.

b) The Parish Council has received a complaint from OCC on behalf of a resident. A tree is overhanging considerably into the resident's garden. The Parish Council is asked to consider engaging a contractor to complete this work.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would seek a permit to work on this tree and then engage the services of a tree surgeon to rectify the issue.

c) The Clerk visited the Spinney after the work had been completed and found some smashed glass on top of the seats in the new gathering space.

It was AGREED to ask A&W Grounds to clear the fly-tipping that has been dumped in Abbey Woods Spinney. It was AGREED that the Clerk should keep a note of all vandalism and rubbish dumping expenditure to inform residents. It was AGREED that the Clerk should take before and after pictures of the fly tipping and post it online with an accompanying message to show the cost of these measures. It was AGREED that CCTV and appropriate signage should be purchased and installed in Abbey Woods Spinney to discourage fly tipping in the future.

d) A sculpture will be installed by March 31st. This is part of the nature trail initiative.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would enquire whether the sculpture of an owl that will be installed can be switched for another as the Parish Council feel it may scare native birds away from the area.

e) A second volunteer day will be organised to establish the gathering space by constructing a dead hedge.

f) Lead councillors for Abbey Woods Spinney have been invited to a Phase 2 meeting, which will be followed by a site meeting with A&W Grounds.

g) The interpretive panel will be installed only after the completion of Phase 2 of Abbey Woods Spinney.

h) The long-term biodiversity management plan has been delayed and is expected to be ready for Parish Council review within the next two months.

i) Forest Schools – Two forest school volunteers are signed up to complete training to enable them to conduct forest school classes in Abbey Woods Spinney, and Abbey Woods Academy Forest School Leader is undergoing refresher training. The Parish Council is asked to confirm the process for obtaining a permit to run a forest school in Abbey Wood Spinney.

The Chairman said he feels that if Forest Schools are running for a profit then they should pay to use the area but volunteers should be able to do so for free. Cllr Bridge asked if there were any examples of other models operating in the area, the Clerk gave a description of other models. It was AGREED that the Clerk would draft a terms of use agreement to be used when forest schools apply to use the area and that the process for obtaining a permit to run a forest school in Abbey Woods Spinney is to apply by email to the Clerk.

11. **The Pavilion Repairs.** To receive an update on the progress of the repair to the Pavilion.

a) Strip out works have been completed. The Parish Council will receive an invoice for this work and then be reimbursed by its insurers.

b) Dehumidifying work is planned to start on 5th March and will last 3 weeks provisionally.

c) The Parish Council is in the process of obtaining three quotes for the repair works to the Pavilion.

d) Further breakages to valves in the pipework in the Pavilion have been identified and the Clerk and Chairman are working to obtain two quotes for the repair/overhaul of this system.

The Chairman gave a full description of events that have occurred in the Pavilion to date. The Clerk is working with the loss adjuster to rectify the issues.

12. **The Pavilion Improvements.** The Parish Council has received funding from SODC for improvements to be carried out to the Pavilion, including energy efficiencies and solar panels. The Clerk is in the process of obtaining three quotes for these improvements.

It was AGREED that Cllr Crawford would provide the details of Project Solar to the Clerk in order that a quotation could be obtained from them for the solar panels to the Pavilion.

13. **Berinsfield Neighbourhood Plan.** The Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan referendum was held on 6th February 2025. The result was a majority in favour of the plan and therefore it will be adopted by SODC and used to decide future planning applications.

The Chairman advised councillors that this plan is now accepted and in use as well as being confirmed to be in the public domain. The Parish Council wishes to congratulate the community and everyone that has worked so hard on this document on its success.

14. **Barclays Bank Mandate.** The bank mandate has been amended with personnel changes reflected. The current Clerk has been added to the mandate with the previous Clerk and two previous councillors removed from the mandate.

The Parish Council acknowledged this item. It was AGREED that the Clerk would enquire if Cllr Sweetland would be happy to be added to the bank mandate for checking purposes.

15. **Handover of Clerk Duties.** The Clerk advises that the handover has been completed as fully as possible. The Parish Council is asked to consider advising the previous Clerk whom has been helping on an ad-hoc basis that this service is no longer required.

The Chairman asked the Clerk if he was happy that sufficient files, details and information had now been handed over, to which the Clerk agreed it had. It was AGREED that the Clerk

should inform the previous Clerk that the Parish Council thank her for her work during the handover period and that her service has been valued but her employment has now ended.

a) Payment of Accounts – Due to the change in Clerk, the Parish Council is asked to establish a policy for payment approval. A draft policy is provided for circulation and members consideration.

It was AGREED to adopt the Payment Authorisation policy that had been drafted by the Clerk but with some changes. The changes should be that salaries, regular contracts and payments should be exempt from the tiered authorisations and that any decisions made in the past on expenditure that has been minuted should also be exempt. It was AGREED that the account from which payments will be made should also be added to the policy.

16. **Meeting of the Finance Committee.** The next meeting of the Finance Committee is on 17th March 2025. The Parish Council is asked to reconsider the date of this meeting as the Clerk will not be able to attend.

It was AGREED to reschedule the meeting of the Finance Committee on 17th March 2025 to 10th April 2025. It was AGREED to extend the deadline for Grant Aid applications until the 31st March.

17. **Correspondence and items for information.**

a) Burial Ground Incident – The Parish Council is asked to note that there has been further incident in the burial ground. CCTV footage has been provided to the police at their request.

b) Burial Ground Memorial Request – The Parish Council is asked to consider the request from a resident to have a memorial that includes a headstone and cover across two full grave plots. This is not currently provided for in the Burial Ground Regulations and therefore is referred for councillors consideration.

It was AGREED to accept this request from a resident, subject to drawings of the memorial being submitted and approved by the Clerk.

c) Burial Ground Access – A resident has made a request to have a key to the gates of the Burial Ground for the purposes of access by vehicle.

It was AGREED that the rules around keyholders would be reaffirmed with the only keyholders being the Chairman, Vice Chairman, members of staff and relevant contractors.

d) SODC Funding – The Parish Council has received correspondence from SODC to advise that funding has been allocated for improvements within Berinsfield. The levels of CIL funding are not currently known but the projects for consideration are as follows:

- Flood lit Multi Use Games Area (MUGA).
- Drainage improvements to the sports pitches on the recreation ground.
- Improved signage and public amenities.

e) CCTV Policy – The Parish Council is asked to consider adopting the CCTV policy attached to this agenda, prepared by the Clerk.

It was AGREED that the CCTV policy that had been drafted should be adopted with some minor agreed changes to be implemented first, this should be effective immediately.

f) Data Deletion Policy – The Parish Council is asked to consider adopting the Data Deletion Policy attached to this agenda, prepared by the Clerk.

It was AGREED to adopt the Data Deletion policy that had been drafted. It was AGREED that the Clerk should send this policy to the former Clerk with a stamped envelope for its return.

g) Estate Agents Signage – The Parish Council has received a message from a resident concerned about excess estate agents signage around the village. These are advertising signs that are not linked to a property and instead are planted around Berinsfield.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would investigate and contact the estate agents to ask them to collect the signs and not do this in the future.

h) 5th Location of Nature Trail Sculpture – The Open Spaces Committee recommended the 5th location for a sculpture as part of the nature trail as the BCA. A response has been received as follows: *“The funding stipulates that any art funded by UK SPF should be publicly available. The BCA is a membership organisation, and members of the public will not have free access to their ground. Therefore, would the Parish Council approve Abbey Woods Spinney as an alternative location?”*. The Parish Council is asked to consider this suggestion.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should inform Hendriette Knouwds of SODC that the Parish Council suggests the burial ground as an alternative location for the 5th sculpture, instead of Abbey Woods Spinney.

i) Planting - SODC Parks team planted 26 new trees on Wednesday 27 February 2025.

j) Benches - Seven Wicksteed benches will be delivered on 4th March and installed by BOE Trading - two of these benches are to be installed post-pump track and skatepark construction.

k) Village Map – The Parish Council’s suggestions for what should be included on the map has been received by SODC. Due to administration issues, although the funding of the map will be provided by SODC, they request that the Parish Council procure the map with the funds sent to the Parish Council in advance. The Parish Council is asked to consider this request.

It was AGREED that the Parish Council will procure the map using funds transferred from SODC.

l) Bike Repair Station - UK SPF has funded a bike repair station for Berinsfield and Hendriette Knouwds is requesting quotes for installation. The proposed location for this will be near the newly constructed pump track. The Parish Council is asked to consider if the bike repair station should be installed near the pump track.

It was AGREED that the bike repair station should be installed near the pump track.

m) Successful CIL Funding For New Projects – Berinsfield Garden Village team was successful in obtaining funding the following three projects and to the level shown below:

Berinsfield Signage and Amenities Upgrade Project - £92,413

Drainage of Berinsfield Sports Fields - £110,000

Multi Use Games Area - £200,000

At this stage the Parish Council is asked to consider if it would be happy to receive the funding for the drainage of Berinsfield Sports Fields and manage the project itself.

It was AGREED that the Parish Council would accept responsibility for the management of the drainage improvements to Berinsfield Sports Field. The Clerk will inform Hendriette Knouwds of this decision.

n) Berinsfield Regeneration Strategy – The public consultation has closed and SODC are now analysing responses. 110 survey responses were received and work is underway. Responses will likely be considered by SODC cabinet in May.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would email Cllr Bennett to ask how the Parish Council will be involved in this final decision.

o) Members of Staff Time Sheets – The Parish Council is asked to consider the implementation of time sheets for their members of staff. These documents will be useful in supporting audits and a document trail for the hours worked by all members of staff employed by Berinsfield Parish Council.

It was AGREED that members of staff should start completing time sheets and that these should be held on file and managed by the Clerk.

p) Berinsfield Parish Council Logo – The Parish Council is asked to consider if it would like to create a new updated logo to reflect the changes Berinsfield has undergone and will undergo in the future. The Clerk has obtained a quote from a graphic designer that would be willing to work to an agreed brief with unlimited edits for £89.00.

It was AGREED to engage the services of a graphic designer to draft options for a new logo for the Parish Council. It was AGREED that the Clerk should set the brief for this logo and that any new logo must incorporate the crook of St Berin as this is part of the heritage of Berinsfield.

q) Reserves Policy – The Clerk has drafted a Reserves Policy as suggested by the IA and it is provided for Parish Council consideration.

A decision on this policy was deferred until the meeting of the Finance Committee on April 10th 2025.

r) Investments Policy – The Clerk has drafted an Investments Policy as suggested by the IA and it is provided for Parish Council consideration.

A decision on this policy was deferred until the meeting of the Finance Committee on April 10th 2025.

s) Wifi – The Parish Council has paid for Wifi to conduct its operations at the previous Clerk's office. Notice has been given and this will finish on 10th March 2025. Therefore, the Parish Council is asked to consider the provision of Wifi at the current Clerk's address for the sum of £50.00 per month.

It was AGREED that the Parish Council would pay for the Wifi at the Clerk's home office in order for him to conduct business on behalf of the Parish Council.

t) SSE Energy Credit Notes – SSE have provided credit notes to the Parish Council for the amounts of £782.35 and £927.99 as they had previously failed to implement the fixed term contract agreed.

18. **Statement of Accounts for payment in February.** To be circulated at the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Woodington that payments totaling £27,036.57 should be approved. It was AGREED that these payments be approved.

19. **Bank Statements.** To inspect the balances on the bank statements for the Parish Council's three accounts and to sign the reconciliation.

Councillors inspected the bank statements and the Chairman signed the reconciliation.

20. **Items for report to Chairman.**

a) Flag Flying – It was AGREED that the Clerk would inform the Caretaker of the dates on which the flag should be flying and ask him to ensure it is flying.

b) Funeral of Mr Croft – It was AGREED that Cllr Jones would attend the funeral of Mr Croft, a former Parish Councillor on behalf of Berinsfield Parish Council. It was AGREED that the Chairman would write some words on behalf of the Parish Council and ask that they be read out.

c) Allotment Plot 20b – It was AGREED that if the tenant of allotment plot 20b wishes to renew their tenancy that the Clerk would inform them that due to the untended plot, the Parish Council will not renew the tenancy. It was AGREED to offer this plot to the first person in line on the allotment waiting list.

21. **Date of next Parish Council Meeting** - 7th April 2025.