

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BERINSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL held on  
Monday 7th April 2025 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 F. I. Beeby	
Councillor A. Jones	
Councillor S. Crawford	
Councillor A. Woodington	
Councillor K. Chrisp	
Councillor A. Head	
Councillor D. Scate	
Councillor T. Eltham	

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

**1. Items raised by Members of the Public.**

- a) Flooding – A member of the public asked the Parish Council if there was any update regarding the recent meetings about flooding on Fane Drive. The Chairman gave an update and thanked the member of the public for his collaborative approach to the issue. It was AGREED that the Clerk would provide updates to this member of the public when possible.
- b) Footpath Pritchard Close – A member of the public raised an issue with a hedge alongside the footpath of Pritchard Close, leading to the shops. He said that it is unsuitable for prams and disabled people due to overgrowth of hedges and brambles. The Chairman explained that this was not a Parish Council owned hedge. It was AGREED that the Clerk would investigate and raise the issue with the relevant authority.
- c) Allotments Hedge – A member of the public raised the allotment hedge backing on to the houses as an issue. He believes that this hedge should be six foot tall but is currently twelve foot tall. The Chairman explained the previous cuts that have been applied to this hedge. It was AGREED that the Clerk would enquire with the Parish Council's ground maintenance contractor in order to obtain a quote for the hedge to be brought down to six foot tall. It was AGREED that this could not be done until winter.
- d) 6 Roman Road – A member of the public attended to speak about a planning application that had been submitted at 6 Roman Road. The member of the public explained the application to the Parish Council and gave a thorough explanation of it, along with a detailed set of answers to any concerns raised on the planning portal. The Chairman thanked the member of the public for attending and explained that the application would be considered by the Parish Council.
- e) Regeneration Strategy Vouchers for Participation – A member of the public raised that she had attended the SODC held consultation and participation events around Berinsfield Regeneration Strategy and been told that she would receive a shopping voucher for her participation but has not received one. The Chairman explained that this was an SODC

initiative and not something being operated or offered by the Parish Council. It was AGREED that Cllr Robin Bennett would make enquiries about this voucher on behalf of the member of the public.

f) Car Show – A member of the public asked if her and her colleagues could hold another previously successful Car Show at the Recreation Ground on 14<sup>th</sup> June and provided risk assessments, insurance certificates and an application form. She asked if the Parish Council could provide use of the Pavilion toilets and carpark. The Chairman explained that due to the ongoing repairs of the Pavilion the Parish Council may not be able to offer use of the toilets, but would seek to offer use of at least one if possible. He also explained that the Parish Council has contractors for the build of the skatepark and pump track using the Pavilion Car Park. It was AGREED to allow the use of the Recreation Ground for the Car Show and if possible, provide the toilets and carpark.

g) Gravedigging – A member of the public raised an issue where a grave that was dug next to the grave where her husband was laid to rest had been left with the discarded dirt piled on top of it and some damage had been sustained to a plant pot that was previously fixed to her husband's grave. She explained she had been talking to the Clerk about this and was unhappy specifically with the damage that had occurred. The Chairman explained that he understood her complaint and could empathise with it but that the Parish Council would need to prove liability in order to be able to seek compensation on her behalf. It was AGREED that the Clerk would write to the gravedigger and ask for an explanation as to how this happened.

h) Cameras in Burial Ground – A member of the public asked why there are no longer cameras in the burial ground as of the last month. The Chairman explained that the cameras had sustained damage and that the Parish Council could not comment further as there is an active investigation on the matter.

i) Bin in Burial Ground – A member of the public asked if it would be possible to put an additional bin in the burial ground as the current one is often overflowing. The Chairman thanked the member of the public for their voluntary work and donations to the burial ground. It was AGREED that the Clerk would obtain a quote for a compost bin in the burial ground.

j) Scented Meditation Garden Signage – A member of the public asked if the Parish Council could put a sign either on the gate of the burial ground or on a tree within the burial ground showing that there is a scented meditation garden provided. It was AGREED that the Clerk would put a sign on a tree near the scented meditation garden to show it is there.

k) County Council Candidate Introduction – A Green Party candidate for the next County Council elections attended the meeting and gave an introduction to himself, stating that he hopes to attend many more meetings and to work with the Parish Council in the future. The Chairman thanked him for his introduction.

l) Parking at Colwell Road – Cllr Bunyan raised an item on behalf of a member of the public, stating that the carparking over a footpath on Colwell Road is still occurring and still causing an issue for access by residents in wheelchairs. The Clerk explained that this had been reported to Highways and added to fixmystreet but that he had not heard anything back. It was AGREED that the Clerk would keep reporting and chasing this matter and provide any updates.

m) Recovery Vehicle Parking – Cllr Head raised an item on behalf of a member of the public and stated that a recovery vehicle is very often left parked on the road at Fane Drive and it has become a nuisance. Cllr Chrisp said that he had previously reported this to the Clerk and that the Clerk had written to the company that owns the vehicle. Cllrs Bunyan and Jones explained that these vehicles are exempt from many highways laws and that the vehicle is legally parked.

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

Councillor Sweetland.

3. **Declarations of Interest.**

No declarations of interest were made.

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 gave a verbal report on District Council matters and the Parish Council noted the details. It was AGREED that the Clerk would write to Nicky Wyer of SODC to request her attendance at a Parish Council meeting prior to the Parish Council submitting a response to the draft Regeneration Strategy document.

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

Cllr Chrisp proposed that the minutes be accepted, Cllr Crawford seconded and it was AGREED that the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025 were a true and accurate record of the meeting and should be approved.

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

a) P25/S0603/HH - Erection of a car port (retrospective) - 6 Roman Road, Berinsfield, OX10 7QN.

The Parish Council discussed this application and it was AGREED that the Clerk should make representations that the Parish Council support this application for the reason that it removes a car from on street parking and it believes this is a good thing. The Parish Council believes that any concerns that may have been raised have been suitably addressed.

8. **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) Bendcrete has given a proposed start date for the build of the Skatepark as 7th April. They have advised that the build time will be 4-5 weeks, dependent on weather.

b) Bendcrete has asked for use of the Pavilion carpark for storage of vehicles and equipment. They would like a key to the gates.

- c) The Clerk has provided letters to residents on Lay Avenue to inform them that the works will be taking place.
- d) The Clerk has provided signage to show the Skatepark will be closed during works.
- e) The Clerk has issued a Facebook and website post to communicate that the Skatepark will be closed.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should install a sign saying the Skatepark is closed for these works and with a sketch of the plans that the build will follow. It was AGREED that the Clerk will advise Bendcrete of a permanent signage solution to include just Berinsfield Parish Council at the bottom if possible. It was AGREED that the Clerk should advise Bendcrete that the Parish Council will undertake the works of procuring and installing a bin, as well as reinstallation of the bench aside from its work with Bendcrete.

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

a) The Clerk has a meeting scheduled with a forest school leader from Abbey Woods Academy on 31st March. The forest school leader has a list of suggestions for the Parish Council which can be seen below.

- A pole-mounted camera in the school overlooking the site to deter inappropriate/drug use
- Management of the nettles surrounding the barked area/extension of the barked area
- Leaving large areas of the playing fields without pitches, especially close to the site, unmown from March through to August to allow wildflowers to grow, and to create habitat diversity for both animals and children (hopefully saving the Council large amounts of money at the same time)
- Planting stands of willow (in the area closest to the school where it floods) and hazel to provide harvestable resources for Forest School activities in future years
- Planting of silver birch at points around the site, again for materials for future use.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should purchase a camera and pole for installation near the school site and overlooking the Spinney area. It was AGREED that the Clerk would obtain a quote for weedkilling the nettles which surround the gathering space to the Spinney. It was AGREED that the only suitable location to be left unmown and for wildflowers would be between the war memorial and the Spinney and that the Clerk would obtain quotes for this project. It was AGREED that the Clerk would ask the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor if they would be willing to swap the mowing of that area for the weedkilling around the Spinney gathering space. It was AGREED that the Clerk would respond to the Forest School leader's request detailing these agreements and that the Parish Council does not wish to plant willow or silver birch trees.

b) Fly tipping at Abbey Woods Spinney has been cleared by A&W Grounds. The Clerk has before and after works pictures and will post to Facebook as agreed by the Parish Council at its March meeting.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would save these images and costs and post these items towards the end of the year, along with any other fly tipping or vandalism related costs.

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

a) Drying work has commenced and should be complete before the sitting of the full Parish Council meeting on April 7th.

b) Three quotes for the repair of the Pavilion have been submitted to the loss adjuster.

c) The Clerk and Chairman are awaiting a meeting with the loss adjuster and a surveyor to confirm the costs of the repair work.

The Chairman updated the Parish Council that the drying works to the main part of the Pavilion had been completed but that further drying to changing rooms was necessary. He also updated that the Clerk and Chairman will meet the loss adjuster and surveyor on 15<sup>th</sup> April at the Pavilion and try to reach a settlement if possible. It was AGREED that the Chairman and Clerk would report back at the next Parish Council meeting.

11. **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.

The Clerk advised that he is working with one solar company on quotations and has another to work with too. It was AGREED that the Clerk would bring quotations to the next meeting of the Parish Council if possible.

12. **CCTV at Berinsfield Burial Ground.** The CCTV which has been installed for some time at Berinsfield Burial Ground has been damaged. A crime report has been made to Thames Valley Police and the Clerk will update members as appropriate.

The Chairman gave an explanation of the damage that had occurred to the cameras and an update on the report made to the police. It was AGREED to seek compensation for the installation of replacement cameras from those responsible for the damage and to do so working with Thames Valley Police.

13. **Scribe Accounts.** Scribe offer software for management of Parish Council accounts, bookings, allotments and burial grounds. This software is specifically designed for the needs of Parish Councils. This software could offer a reduction in labour hours for the Clerk and would bring all Parish Council affairs under one interactive software, maximising efficiency.

a) The Parish Council is asked to consider the purchase of the full Scribe software offering for a one-off payment of £1,140 and a monthly installment of £128. There is no contract and the Parish Council could end this arrangement if it wishes.

b) Subject to Item 13. A), the Parish Council is asked to consider the cancellation of its Sage Accounts package at £36.00 per month.

c) Scribe is used by a high number of Parish and Town Councils in Oxfordshire and their Clerks have provided very positive feedback.

The Clerk gave a detailed overview of the packages on offer from Scribe and explained that it will be beneficial for the Parish Council to purchase these packages. Cllr Bridge explained that Scribe is being used by many other Parish Councils in Oxfordshire. It was AGREED

that the Clerk would purchase Scribe as outlined for a one-off payment of £1,140 and a monthly payment of £128 on behalf of the Parish Council.

14. **Meeting Freddie Van Mierlo MP.** The Parish Council is asked to note that as the situation at the Pavilion is ongoing, the meeting between Freddie Van Mierlo MP and the Parish Council will now be held at a changed venue of BCA.

The Parish Council acknowledged this information and the change of venue.

15. **Audit 2024-25.** The Parish Council is asked to consider the following items relating to the Internal and External Audit of 2024-25 financial year.

- a) Internal Audit – To receive an update on the progress of the Internal Audit by appointed auditor Theresa Goss.
- b) Annual Governance Statement – To respond appropriately to the questions on the Annual Governance Statement.
- c) Accounting Statement – To consider and agree the accounting statement figures.
- d) Electors Rights – to decide the dates of the Exercise of Public Rights as ..... to .....

The Clerk explained that he needed to submit an AGAR form to the Internal Auditor prior to the above points being considered and agreed. The Parish Council accepted this and it was AGREED that the Clerk would report back at the next Parish Council meeting.

16. **Annual Open Parish Council Meeting.** The Parish Council is advised that the date previously set for the Annual Open Parish Council Meeting is 28<sup>th</sup> April.

The Parish Council acknowledged this information.

17. **Fly Tipping at Old Drayton Road Site.** Fly tipping has occurred at Old Drayton Road. This has been cleared voluntarily and the Clerk has issued correspondence to Highways. The Parish Council is asked to consider the purchase of CCTV to be installed in a nearby tree as a deterrent.

It was AGREED that the Clerk, working with Councillor Scate would purchase a CCTV camera to be installed at Old Drayton Road Site, in order to deter future fly tipping.

18. **Parish Council Logo.** The Clerk has prepared three suggestions for a new logo for Berinsfield Parish Council and they are enclosed with this agenda. The Parish Council is asked to feedback on the following points:

- a) Does the Parish Council still wish to adopt a new logo?
- b) Are any of the initial suggestions for a new logo acceptable?
- c) Would the Parish Council like to run a competition for residents to submit ideas for a new logo for the Parish Council?
- d) Does the Parish Council wish to open consultation with residents on a new logo design and what should be included?

It was AGREED that the Parish Council would not seek to change its logo at the present time.

**19. Correspondence and items for information.**

a) Gravedigging – The Parish Council has been contacted by a resident whose husband is buried in Berinsfield Burial ground. The resident was unhappy with the condition the grave of her husband had been left in after the adjacent plot was dug. A permanently fixed pot had been removed and the grave left in an untidy manner.

b) Oxfordshire County Council Day – Oxfordshire County Council are holding their County Council Day at County Hall, Oxford on 3<sup>rd</sup> April and Berinsfield Parish Council has been allocated two attendee places.

c) The Berin Center Men in Sheds – The Chairman and Clerk will meet with representatives from The Berin Center at the Pavilion on 3<sup>rd</sup> April to discuss their Men in Sheds project and if the Pavilion is a suitable site.

It was AGREED that the Parish Council supports the use of the Pavilion as a site for this project and that the only charge it would seek from The Berin Center is for their use of energy.

d) Flying Flags for National Days – The Clerk has provided a list of national dates for flag flying to the Caretaker and asked that he flies the national flag on the government provided dates.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should arrange for the flag to be flown at all times in the future, instead of just on national days of importance.

e) Bollards at Green Furlong – Following a meeting with the team leader of South Oxfordshire District Council's Parks Team and the Clerk and Chairman, the bollards which are missing or rotting at Green Furlong will be replaced in the coming weeks.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would follow this up and provide an update to the Parish Council at its next meeting.

f) Funeral of Former Councillors – The Parish Council is asked to note that the funeral for former Councillors Mr Edwin Croft and Mrs Sheila Croft will be held on 9<sup>th</sup> April.

The Parish Council acknowledged this information and that the Chairman will read at the funeral on behalf of the Parish Council.

g) Riverside Counselling – Unfortunately due to a lack of grants, Riverside Counselling has made the difficult decision to withdraw its services from Berinsfield.

h) Berinsfield Regeneration Strategy – The Clerk has made an application for the Parish Council to be given the opportunity to speak at SODC's cabinet meeting where decisions on the Regeneration Strategy will be taken. The Clerk will update the Parish Council as appropriate.

i) Electronic Agendas – Councillors are reminded that if they prefer to receive agendas, minutes and other documents by email then to please advise the Clerk of this preference. All Councillors who would like to remain receiving these in the post, will do so.

20. **Items for Report to the Chairman.**

a) Caretakers Holidays – The Clerk reported that in previous years the Caretaker had been paid for untaken holidays but that it was not provided for in his contract. It was AGREED that the Clerk should write to the Caretaker and advise that on this occasion he will be asked to carry five days of annual leave forward into next year and that he would be paid for any other untaken holidays. The Clerk will also explain that this is the last year this would happen and that in the future any untaken holidays will not be paid and will be lost.

b) Allotments – Councillor Head reported figures of other Parish Council's fees for allotment plots with several costing less than those offered by Berinsfield Parish Council.

c) War Memorial – Councillor Bridge reported that there would be a service at the War Memorial on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April and requested that there be some weeding prior to this. It was AGREED that the Clerk would ask the Parish Council's ground maintenance contractor to conduct a tidy up of the area.

21. **Date of next ordinary Parish Council Meeting - 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025.**