

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BERINSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL held on
Monday 12th May 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 I. Bunyan
Councillor L. Sweetland
Councillor T. Eltham

Chairman
Vice Chairman

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

1. Items raised by members of the public.

- a) Berinsfield Football Club Pavilion Update – The Chairman of Berinsfield Football Club asked for an update regarding the Pavilion and its repair. The Clerk gave an update on the insurance claim and said that we have agreement to the repair costs from the insurer's loss adjuster. Subject to agreement from the Parish Council, the Pavilion repair should proceed shortly.
- b) Berinsfield Football Club Grant Application – The Chairman of Berinsfield Football Club asked for an update regarding their application for Grant Aid from the Parish Council. The Clerk explained that the Finance Committee meeting held some concerns regarding the accounts of the football club and therefore felt they were not able to award a grant. The Chairman of the Football Club then asked if the Parish Council would be willing to write off any unpaid fees for the year to date, in the region of £1,400.00. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council would need to consider this request.
- c) Abbey Woods Spinney – A Forest School leader from Abbey Woods Academy raised Abbey Woods Spinney and asked if the Parish Council would reconsider the use of weed killer in the area and instead use membrane and mulch to control nettles. He also raised planting of willows and silver birch trees and said he may be able source saplings free of charge. Cllr Bunyan asked some questions regarding the proposal of how to control weeds and the Clerk advised that the Parish Council would need to consider this request.
- d) No.10 Russell Jackson Close – Cllr Beeby raised an issue from a resident in Russell Jackson Close regarding an overgrown tree, creating nuisance to her property. It was AGREED that the Clerk would write to SOHA to draw their attention to the matter and to ask them to conduct a cut.
- e) Damaged Planter at Burial Ground – Cllr Beeby raised an issue on behalf of a resident, the resident's husband's memorial planter had suffered damage and the resident has requested that the Parish Council pay for the repair. It was AGREED that the Clerk would write to the resident advising that the Parish Council will seek a volunteer to complete the repair.

2. Apologies for absence.

Councillors Scate and Jones.

3. Declaration of Interests.

To receive declarations of any personal or prejudicial interest under consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Parish Councils (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2001.

Cllr Scott-Ely declared an interest in item 14 of the agenda as a relative of a director of BOE Trading.

4. Election of Chairman for the year 2025-26.

Cllr Scott-Ely was nominated by Cllr Bunyan and seconded by Cllr Jones. It was AGREED that Cllr Scott-Ely would be elected as Chairman of Berinsfield Parish Council for the year 2025-26.

5. Election of Vice-Chairman for the year 2025-26.

Cllr Bridge was nominated by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Woodington. It was AGREED that Cllr Bridge would be elected as Vice Chairman of Berinsfield Parish Council for the year 2025-26.

5. County Councillor's Report.

County Councillor Jones was not present and sent his apologies.

7. District Councillor's Report.

Cllr Bennett provided a written report and explained it to the Parish Council. The Parish Council thanked him for his report and noted its contents.

8. To Appoint Members to serve on Parish Council Committees/Sub-Committees for the year 2025-26. A maximum of seven members should be appointed to serve on each committee.

- a) Finance, General Purposes and Solar Farm
- b) Allotments, Playing Fields, Open Spaces and Burial Groun
- c) Pavilion
- d) Appointments
- e) Freedom of Information/GDPR/Complaints
- f) Planning, Highways and Public Transport

It was AGREED to rename the Appointments Committee to Staffing Committee.
The following members were elected to the above committees.

Finance Committee Solar Farm Sub-Committee Councillor S. Scott-Ely Councillor P. Bridge Councillor I. Bunyan Councillor Chrisp Councillor Mrs. A. Jones Councillor D. Scate Councillor Mrs. L. Sweetland	Pavilion Committee Councillor S. Scott-Ely Councillor P. Bridge Councillor K. Chrisp Councillor S. Crawford Councillor D. Scate Councillor A. Woodington
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Allotments, Playing Fields, Open Spaces, Burial Ground & Skateboard Park Committee Councillor S. Scott-Ely Councillor P. Bridge Councillor Mrs. A. Head Councillor Mrs. A. Jones Councillor D. Scate Councillor A. Woodington	Planning, Highways & Public Transport Committee Councillor S. Scott-Ely Councillor P. Bridge Councillor K. Chrisp Councillor Mrs. I. Beeby
Appointments Committee Councillor S. Scott-Ely Councillor P. Bridge Councillor Mrs. A. Jones Councillor Mrs. L. Sweetland	Complaints/Freedom of Information/GDPR Committee Councillor S. Scott-Ely Councillor P. Bridge Councillors to be seconded as required
Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group All Members of the Parish Council	Public Transport Representative Vacant HIF1 (OCC) Councillor S. Scott-Ely Councillor P. Bridge Councillors to be seconded as required <hr/> Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plan Alliance Councillors can opt to attend when notices of meetings are received.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would advertise for members of the public who may be interested in joining sub committees to the Parish Council including Pavilion, Open Spaces and Highways.

The Chair and Vice-Chair are ex-officio members of all of the above Committees.

9. **To receive and approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th April 2025.**

It was AGREED to approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th April 2025.

10. **To receive and approve the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 10th April 2025.**

It was AGREED to approve the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 10th April 2025 and to accept all recommendations made by the Finance Committee meeting.

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

- a) P25/S0930/HH – 3 Chiltern Close, Berinsfield, OX10 7PZ - Single storey front extension.

It was AGREED that the Parish Council would support this application and the Clerk would make representations to this effect.

- b) P25/S1267/HH - 8 Wimblestraw Road, Berinsfield, OX10 7NA - Demolition of existing garage & outhouse. Single storey front and rear extensions with part two storey rear extensions with first floor side extension.

It was AGREED that the Parish Council would comment that whilst it does not have any views strong enough to support or object to this application, it does have some concerns surrounding over development of the plot and the addition of a second front door.

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

The Parish Council noted this decision.

- 12. **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 projects and any other relevant information relating to the projects.

- a) Bendcrete are currently on site and constructing the additional capacity to the Skatepark.
- b) There has been one week during which no contractor attended site, this was advised as staff sickness but assurance has been given that the project will not be delayed.
- c) Progress reports have been sent periodically by Bendcrete and shared with the Parish Council.
- d) Bendcrete has finalised a permanent sign for the Skatepark which is shared with this agenda.
- e) C&K Contractors have experienced some delays and are now hoping to start construction of the pump track no later than 12th May. An initial deposit has been paid for the works.

The Clerk explained that Bendcrete would complete and handover the site on Friday 16th May 2025 and invited councillors to the handover for inspection. It was AGREED the Clerk would communicate the time with Cllrs Scott-Ely, Bridge, Bunyan and Sweetland.

The Clerk presented an invoice from C&K Contractors for the second payment for works to the Pump Track and asked the Parish Council for agreement to pay the invoice of £39,600.00. It was AGREED that the Clerk should make payment of £39,600.00 to C&K Contractors in line with the agreed payment schedule.

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

- a) A&W Grounds has submitted a quote for the initial weed control at Abbey Woods Spinney of £220.00.

It was AGREED that this quote be accepted and the Clerk instruct A&W Grounds to carry out this work.

- b) A&W Grounds agree to swap maintenance of the grass area behind the war memorial for the ongoing control of weeds in Abbey Woods Spinney gathering area, as requested at the last meeting of the Parish Council.
- c) A&W Grounds are happy to install the moon gate and dead hedge at Abbey Woods Spinney gathering area and it will fall under their ad-hoc rate.

It was AGREED that the Parish Council would like to see a visual of any exact moon gate and dead hedge prior to agreement to install it into the Abbey Woods Spinney area.

- d) A Forest School leader that submitted requests for the last meeting has fed back that weed killing is against Forest School ethos and has asked that the Parish Council use membrane to control the weeds in Abbey Woods Spinney.

As at point 13.a of these minutes, it was AGREED that the most appropriate way at present to control these nettles was with cutting and weed killing.

- e) CCTV has been purchased for use in Abbey Woods Spinney.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should purchase a sim contract for the CCTV camera to the Spinney and the camera to Old Drayton Road.

- f) The Parish Council is asked to consider adopting the Terms of Use Agreement for Forest Schools, drafted by the Clerk.

It was AGREED to adopt and use the Terms of Use Agreement for Forest Schools, drafted by the Clerk.

- g) The newly installed squirrel sculpture in Abbey Woods Spinney has unfortunately been damaged.

- h) A&W will provide a quote for the creation of a wild flower meadow to the area behind the war memorial.

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

- a) The Clerk and Chairman met with the insurers Loss Adjuster and Surveyor on 15th April at the Pavilion.
- b) Quotes have been submitted to the loss adjuster, with the Parish Council's insurers having shortlisted one quote.
- c) The Clerk is asking for an update on the insurance claim from the loss adjuster daily.

The Clerk explained that the Loss Adjuster had been in contact to confirm agreement to quotation from BOE Trading for the repairs, amounting to £78,000.00. The Parish Council AGREED to accept this quotation from BOE Trading and for the Clerk to instruct them to complete the repair works. It was AGREED that delegation to manage BOE Trading for this repair would be made to the Clerk and that the Clerk should act on behalf of the Parish Council and its best interests for this matter specifically.

The Clerk explained that the Loss Adjuster had asked if the Parish Council would like Polygon Drying Contractors to return to site and conduct further drying works. It was AGREED that the Clerk should inform the Loss Adjuster that it does not wish for Polygon to return.

15. **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.

- a) The Clerk and Cllr Scate are scheduled for a Teams meeting with NGRE Solar, to ensure that their quote accurately meets the needs of the Parish Council.
- b) JE Solar has submitted a quote with adaptations suggested by the Clerk and Cllr Scate.

- c) Eco-Ess will be meeting with the Clerk and Cllr Scate on a date to be confirmed, to ensure that their quote accurately meets the needs of the Parish Council.
- d) The Clerk has prepared several documents for Parish Council consideration around the management of the Pavilion upon reopening. The Clerk recommends that the Parish Council schedules a meeting of its Open Spaces Committee in order to go through these documents.
- e) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council met with an architect at the Pavilion to gain initial ideas for any future development. A fee of around £5,000.00 is required for development of plans for how to develop the Pavilion.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should ask LAPD to draw up development plans for a fee of £5,000.00.

The Clerk presented one quote from JE Solar for £28,800.00 and one quote from NGRE Solar for £35,990.00. It was AGREED that the Parish Council delegates authority to negotiate the price with NGRE Solar and to accept the quote at a maximum of £35,990.00. It was AGREED to proceed with the installation of a solar system with NGRE Solar.

16. **Berinsfield Burial Ground.** To receive updates and information on Berinsfield Burial Ground.

- a) The case regarding the CCTV that was damaged in Berinsfield Burial Ground is ongoing.
- b) A resident has submitted a request to purchase a bench and plaque to install into the burial ground. The Clerk has asked for a link or drawing of the proposed bench and plaque. The Parish Council is asked to consider this request.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should write to this resident and advise that the Parish Council does not accept this request.

- c) A resident has asked to install a small stake into the scented meditation garden in memory of a loved one that was buried in Abingdon. The Parish Council is asked to consider this request.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should write to this resident and advise that the Parish Council does not accept this request.

- d) A sign has been installed in the scented meditation garden to show the purpose of the garden, as agreed at the last meeting of the Parish Council.
- e) The previous bin in the Burial Ground was unfit for use and two new bins have been installed for £64.99.
- f) The Parish Council is asked to review the Burial Ground Regulations for the next 12 months.

It was AGREED to make amendment to the Burial Ground Regulations section “General Rules” and that the Parish Council AGREED to use the amended Regulations for the next 12 months.

- g) A resident volunteer has suggested they would be happy to paint the gates of the burial ground, the Parish Council is asked to consider this proposal.

It was AGREED that the Parish Council accept this request and that the Clerk should write to this resident to thank them and accept the offer.

- h) A resident has requested the provision of lighting and new fencing in the burial ground. The Parish Council is asked to consider this request.

It was AGREED that the Parish Council does not accept this request and that the Clerk should write to this resident to advise of the decision.

17. **Review of Parish Council Documents.** To consider the review of Parish Council documents.

- a) The Parish Council is asked to consider the review of its Standing Orders in line with its policy to do so annually. Members are asked to confirm if they have a copy of the standing orders, as should be the case.

It was AGREED to continue to use the Standing Orders with a review date of 12th May 2025. It was confirmed by all members that they hold a copy of the Standing Orders.

- b) The Parish Council is asked to consider the review of its Financial Regulations and to make amendments in line with its newly adopted Payment Authorisation Policy.

It was AGREED to continue to use the Financial Regulations with an amendment to refer to the adopted Payment Authorisation Policy and with a review date of 12th May 2025.

- c) The Parish Council is asked to consider the review of its Burial Ground Regulations.

It was AGREED to continue to use the Burial Ground Regulations with amendment as per minute 16.a of these minutes and with a review date of 12th May 2025.

18. **Meeting Freddie Van Mierlo MP.** To receive an update and information on the rearranged meeting between the Parish Council and Freddie Van Mierlo MP.

- a) A rearranged meeting of 19th May at 11.30am has been agreed with the MP's office and will take place at the BCA.

The Parish Council noted this information and AGREED to consent to photographs being taken.

19. **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 3rd June 2025 to 14th July 2025.

20. **Staff Appraisals.** To consider a date for annual appraisals with members of staff.

- a) The Parish Council is asked to consider the date of 19th May 2025, to complete appraisals with both members of staff.

- b) The Parish Council is asked to delegate authority to complete these appraisals to the Appointments Committee or the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council AGREED to the date of 19th May 2025, at the BCA for staff appraisals. It was AGREED to delegate authority to members of the Staffing Committee.

21. **Clerk Training.** To receive an update on the Clerk's ongoing training.

- a) The Clerk has completed the initial two courses that he was enrolled on (ILCA and FILCA).
- b) The Parish Council is asked to consider the purchase of CILCA training and qualification for the Clerk.

It was AGREED to purchase CILCA training for the Clerk and that the Parish Council agrees to costs as necessary of the training.

22. **Correspondence and items for information.**

- a) Allotments Hedge – A&W Grounds have agreed to provide a quote for the cutting of the allotment hedge from 12 foot to 6 foot, as requested at the last meeting of the Parish Council. The Parish Council is asked to note that a survey must be completed to ensure there are no nests in the hedge and that this work is recommended to take place later in the year.
- b) Rugbytots – The Clerk met with SODC's Community Development Officer and the owner of the local Rugbytots Franchise on 1st May. Rugbytots will be bringing taster sessions to Berinsfield Recreation Ground, free of charge working with SODC. The Parish Council is asked to consider granting use of the Pavilion toilets for these taster sessions.

It was AGREED that the Parish Council would grant free use of the Pavilion toilets for Rugbytots taster sessions.

- c) Football Pitch Renovation – The Parish Council is asked to consider renovation of its football pitches as it has done in previous years. The cost for this in the last financial year was £9675.

It was AGREED to renovate the football pitches on the condition that Pitch Power grants are received.

- d) Scribe Accounts Package – As per the previous meeting of the Parish Council, Scribe's accounts, allotment, cemetery and bookings packages have been purchased and the Clerk is using them. All accounts practices are live with Scribe. Work is ongoing to ensure that allotments, cemetery and bookings will be used to its full potential.
- e) Hot Air Balloon Landing – In April, a hot air balloon landed on Berinsfield Recreation Ground and staff were asked to unlock the gates to the Recreation Ground to allow access. No prior warning was given to the Parish Council, nor permission sought. The Clerk has written to the owners/operators of the balloon to ask that permission is sought prior to landing in the future and to advise that the Parish Council will seek any damages from the owners/operators.
- f) Summer Basket Displays – ID Verde will deliver and install the summer hanging basket displays on 21st May, in line with the contract signed for 2024-26.
- g) Planting of Trees – Tree planting by Complete Tree Services is rescheduled for 7th May and the Clerk will meet contractors onsite to confirm placement of the trees.

It was AGREED that Cllr Chrisp and a volunteer resident would be asked to complete the watering of these newly planted trees.

- h) Bottle Bank – The Clerk was alerted to the bottle bank in Green Furlong overflowing and additional bottles being stored outside of the bin. The Clerk has written to SODC officers, who have confirmed that it will be collected. They will also seek to paint hatches around the bank to deter parking which has prevented access for their vehicles in the past.
- i) Defibrillator – The defibrillator that the Parish Council received grant funding for has been purchased and replaced the older and out of warranty unit at the dental studio.
- j) Co-producing a SEND Parent/Carers Support Group in Berinsfield – An invitation to discuss setting up a support group has been received from SODC officers. The Parish Council is asked to consider engaging in this process.

It was AGREED to thank SODC officers for the invitation but to confirm that members of the Parish Council will not attend.

- k) VE Day Celebrations – The Parish Council will light a beacon at 9.30pm on 8th May in celebration of VE Day's 80 year anniversary. A hymn will be played and those in attendance are asked to sing along.
- l) Litter at Lodden Avenue Play Area – A resident has emailed to complain about the litter in Lodden Avenue Play Area. The resident is a regular attendee with her young child and has said that it has become a major issue and she has to monitor to ensure her child does not touch the rubbish. This resident has asked the Parish Council for actions to ensure the issue is tackled.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should ask the Caretaker to conduct a litter pick in the area.

- m) Review of Insurance Policies – To review the insurance arrangements and policies covering the Parish Council.

- 23. **Statement of Accounts for payment in April.** To be circulated at the meeting.
- 24. **Bank Statements.** To inspect the balances on the bank statements for the Parish Council's three accounts and to sign the reconciliation.
- 25. **Items for report to Chairman.**
- 26. **Date of next ordinary Parish Council Meeting – 2nd June 2025.**