

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BERINSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL held on
Monday 6th October 2025 at 7.15 p.m. in the Pavilion, Lay Avenue, Berinsfield, Oxon.**

PRESENT

Councillor L. Sweetland
Councillor I. Bunyan
Councillor A. Woodington
Councillor K. Chrisp
Councillor A. Head
Councillor D. Scate
Councillor T. Eltham

In the Chair

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

1. **Election of Chair for this meeting.** In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Parish Council, to elect a Chair of this Parish Council meeting.

Councillor Bunyan proposed Councillor Sweetland assume the position of Chair for this Parish Council meeting, Councillor Head seconded and it was AGREED unanimously that Councillor Sweetland would be elected as Chair for this meeting.

2. **Items raised by members of the public.**

- a) Tree Branches – A member of the public asked if there was an update regarding trees that could do with some maintenance on Wimblestraw Road, raised at the last meeting. The Clerk said that there is no budget left in the tree planting and maintenance budget and in order to spend on this matter, the Finance Committee of the Parish Council would need to recommend transfer of budgets.
- b) H Café Noise – A member of the public asked if the Parish Council had any thoughts or knowledge on what could be done about the level of noise coming from H Café biker meets. He said that several residents on Kennett Close had complained about the noise and it is very disturbing. The Clerk explained that this Parish Council asked him to contact Dorchester to work collaboratively on it and he had, Dorchester has done a lot of work on this and it seems that all that can be done from here is to call the police regularly when an issue is spotted.
- c) Men in Sheds – A director of The Berin Centre attended and spoke about the potential collaboration between the Parish Council and The Berin Centre for a Men In Sheds scheme. She gave details of the project and its intended reach within the community. She mentioned that a lease would now be needed for land at the Pavilion in order to obtain grant funding for the project. It was AGREED that the Clerk should obtain a lease at a cost not more than £3,000.00 and provide it to the Parish Council for approval at a future meeting.
- d) Character Reference – A business owner from within Berinsfield attended and explained that in order for family members to be able to attend a family wedding in the UK, visa applications were necessary. He explained that he was willing to sponsor these applications and offer the Home Office assurances on the return of guests to the wedding. He requested that the Parish Council provide a character reference to him, having been a part of the community for decades. The Clerk

advised the Parish Council that a character reference could be written but that any implication or suggestion that the Parish Council underwrites or guarantees the removal of visitors should be avoided. It was AGREED that the Clerk should draft a character reference that exclusively refers to the long standing presence of the business owner in the community.

3. **Apologies for absence.**

Cllrs Scott-Ely, Bridge and Crawford.

4. **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 Bunyan declared an interest in item 17 of the agenda and agreed to not participate in the items discussion.

5. **County Councillor's Report.**

County Councillor Jones provided a written report to the Parish Council and was in attendance to explain it. The Parish Council noted the contents and thanked him for the report.

6. **District Councillor's Report.**

District Councillor Bennett provided a written report to the Parish Council and was in attendance to explain it. The Parish Council noted the contents and thanked him for the report.

7. **Health and Wellbeing Grants Scheme.** SODC Officer to address the Parish Council about proposals for a 2nd round of Health and Wellbeing grants.

Apologies were sent by the SODC Officer who was unable to attend the meeting to address the Parish Council due to technical issues. Cllr Scate expressed concern that the timeline for the Health and Wellbeing scheme will now be tight.

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

P25/S1267/HH - 8 Wimblestraw Road Berinsfield OX10 7NA - Demolition of existing garage & outhouse. Erection of single storey front extension and part single storey, part two storey side and rear extension (as amended by drwgnos P5A, P6B and P7C to reduce the size of the extensions received on 10 July 2025). Planning permission granted.

This planning decision was noted by the Parish Council.

9. **To receive and approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st September 2025.**

It was proposed by Cllr Head and seconded by Cllr Chrisp and AGREED that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st September 2025 were a true and accurate record of the meeting and should be approved.

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

No applications or decisions were received.

11. **Pump Track.** The Parish Council is asked to consider payment of the final retention invoice for the work to construct the Pump Track totaling £4,125.00 + VAT.

The Clerk explained that some councillors had raised concerns regarding some aspects of the Pump Track and its construction but that he had reported these to the contractor who attended the very next day and completed remedial works. The Clerk explained that it was his recommendation that this invoice now be approved. It was AGREED that the final retention invoice for the work to construct the Pump Track totaling £4,125.00 + VAT be approved.

Cllr Bunyan said that parking has become an issue for visitors to the Pump Track and the Clerk explained that hirers of the Pavilion had also suggested that the Pavilion carpark has been used for visitors to the Pump Track during their hire period. It was AGREED that the Clerk should get a sign drafted for the gates to Pavilion which addresses the issue of parking and report back to the Parish Council at its next meeting.

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

The Clerk explained that there were no further updates on the progress of Abbey Woods Spinney.

13. **District and County Councillor Grant Schemes.** To further consider any causes for which a grant from District Councillor Bennett or County Councillor Jones, could be applied for.

The Clerk explained that there are currently some issues regarding full size goal posts for the pitches at the Recreation Ground and that there has been a conflict the past weekend between two bookings who both needed the goals to be out. It was AGREED by the Parish Council to apply to both Councillors Grant Schemes for a grant to be used for full sized, movable goal posts. It was also AGREED to look into whether a grant could be obtained from the Health and Wellbeing Grant Scheme.

14. **Berifest 2026.** To consider the prospect of Berifest 2026 and whether it is something that the Parish Council can drive forward.

The Clerk explained that he had one further expression of interest in volunteering to assist with Berifest. The Council acknowledged that it had previously set a deadline of November to take a decision on whether Berifest 2026 would move forward.

15. **Remembrance Day 2025.** To consider if the Parish Council wishes to arrange a service of remembrance and invite service personnel for Remembrance Day 2025.

It was AGREED by the Parish Council that the Clerk should talk to the vicar of the church of St Mary and St Berin about if they have any plans for a service and if not, to put in place a small and basic service at the war memorial. It was AGREED that the Clerk should write to US Aiforce advising of such service once confirmed.

16. **Berinsfield Burial Ground.**

- a) To consider two applications for memorial benches in Berinsfield Burial Ground.

It was AGREED that the applications for both memorial benches should be approved but that they should both be installed on already existing hard standing and that no new concrete or tarmac works should be initiated. It was AGREED that the Clerk should work with both applicants on the installation.

- b) To consider the provision of a "Berinsfield Burial Ground Group" of volunteer residents to make recommendations and suggestions.

Councillor Bunyan explained that there is a potential for duplication of work by the Parish Council as the Burial Ground is already covered by the Open Spaces committee. The Clerk explained that whilst any such sub committee would not have delegated authority and that all recommendations would be put before the full Parish Council for decisions, it would be a use of Parish Council resources in order to send the Clerk to any such meetings.

It was AGREED to reject the suggestion of a Burial Ground committee and that it is not something the Parish Council would establish.

17. The Pavilion.

- a) To consider the ongoing provision of staffing and facility management.

The Clerk explained the finances of a full month of staffing by A&W Grounds and the comparison between that and having an employee complete the work. It was AGREED to ask A&W to extend the trial by another month and during which time the Clerk should work with them to form the basis of a draft contract, to be considered by the Parish Council at its November meeting.

- b) To consider fees for a new hirer of the Pavilion on an ongoing basis.

The Clerk explained that a new hirer had made a booking for a football match in September and played the game at Berinsfield Recreation Ground, that they stated was a success. The booking was for an under 14s girls team and at present there are no girls football teams in Berinsfield, therefore the club was bringing provision to Berinsfield that was not currently present. The club had extended their thanks and asked if there was any possibility to review the hire fee they have been given as an organisation outside of Berinsfield for bookings moving forward, if they were to make Berinsfield their home on a more permanent basis.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should offer a reduced price of £50.00 + VAT per booking with a reduction to £45.00 if block booked for the season.

- c) Repairs to toilets in the changing rooms are needed, the Clerk is working on quotes for this work.

The Parish Council acknowledged this point.

- d) Repairs to the alarm system are needed. The Parish Council is asked to consider a quote for the repairs for £650.00.

It was AGREED by the Parish Council to accept this quotation and ask the Clerk to get the work completed.

- e) To consider a quotation from Biffa for a 1100L bin to be emptied at the Pavilion weekly for a cost of £23.11 per week.

It was AGREED by the Parish Council to cancel the current deal for waste collections and for the Clerk to sign the new deal with Biffa as outlined above.

18. Application for Grant Assistance. An application for funding from Berinsfield Community Association has been received. The Parish Council considered this request at its last meeting and the Clerk now presents a copy of the grant agreement for Parish Council approval.

At this stage of the meeting Cllr Bunyan sat out discussion as he had declared an interest in this item of the agenda.

It was AGREED by the Parish Council that the agreement presented by the Clerk is approved and that the funding should be provided on that basis.

19. **Open Spaces Committee.** To set a date for the next meeting of the Open Spaces Committee.

As there were several members of the Open Spaces Committee absent, it was AGREED to postpone the setting of a date for the committees next meeting to the next meeting of the full Parish Council.

20. **Christmas Lights.** To consider approval of options for Christmas Lights for December 2025.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should obtain more options for Christmas Lights that can be put in existing trees around the village and present them to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

21. **Correspondence and items for information.**

- a) H Café – The Clerk has made contact with Dorchester Parish Council and collaboration on the noise from H Café is now underway.
- b) Village Map – The Clerk has been informed that the first proof of the Village Map will be ready in three weeks.

22. **Statement of Accounts for payment in September.** To be circulated at the meeting.

The statement of accounts was circulated and AGREED by the Parish Council.

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

The bank statements were inspected and the reconciliation signed by Cllr Sweetland.

24. **Items for report to Chairman.**

a) Skip for Allotments – Cllr Head raised that the allotments require a skip to clear rubbish from a plot which has not been maintained and other rubbish around the site. It was AGREED that the Clerk should obtain quotes for a grab lorry or skip and report them to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

b) Hedge Trimmer for Allotments – Cllr Head suggested that the Parish Council consider the purchase of a hedge trimmer for use by allotment tenants instead of paying a contractor to complete the work of trimming hedges each year. Cllr Scate expressed concerns regarding the liability of the Parish Council for letting people use a tool with hazards and the Parish Council AGREED that in the present format of the allotments and tenancies, it is not practical to do so.

c) Seats in Bus Shelters – Cllr Chrisp raised the provision of seats in bus shelters in Berinsfield. The Clerk explained that the Garden Village team at SODC do have a budget for amenities and it was AGREED the Clerk would try to set up a meeting between Cllr Chrisp and these officers.

d) Solar Energy at Pavilion – The Clerk explained that he has been contacted by a broker that is able to offer enhanced prices for export of solar energy from the Pavilion and that approval for this broker to speak to the Parish Councils energy supplier must be given in order to get the prices investigated. It was AGREED that approval is given for the broker to speak to the Parish Council's energy supplier.

25. **Date of next ordinary Parish Council Meeting** – 3rd November 2025.