



Minutes of a meeting of Great Shefford Parish Council held on Monday 1st September 2025 at 7.30pm at Great Shefford Village Hall

Present: Councillor Piers Storey (Chairman)
Councillors Miranda Armstrong, Tony Coard, Louisa Freeman and Carol Turner

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Parish Clerk)
1 member of public

2025-09/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jessica Copcutt.

2025-09/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Turner declared an interest in agenda item number 9 (2025-09/09), application 25/01267/CERTP – Apple Tree Cottage, Station Road, as a neighbouring property.

Councillor Armstrong declared an interest in agenda item number 9 (2025-09/09), applications 25/01601/FUL & 25/01602/LBC – Swan Inn, Newbury Road, as the proprietor.

2025-09/03 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED to take as read and confirm as accurate the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2025.

2025-09/04 OPEN FORUM

- i. There were no public questions.
- ii. District Councillor Clive Hooker was not present to provide a report.
- iii. A request had been received from a local resident to 'raise awareness of residents' responsibilities not to cause nuisance or pollution from bonfires'.
It was agreed to add the following information to the parish website:

There are no laws against having a bonfire but there are laws about causing a nuisance. There are no set times in law which specify when burning may or may not take place. Smoke, or the smell of smoke from bonfires, can cause a statutory nuisance.

When having a bonfire make sure you:

- only burn dry material
- never burn household rubbish, rubber tyres, or anything containing plastic, foam or paint
- never use old engine oil, methylated spirits or petrol to light the fire or encourage it to burn
- avoid lighting a fire in unsuitable weather conditions - smoke hangs in the air on damp, still days and in the evening - if it is windy, smoke may be blown into neighbours' gardens and across roads

2025-09/04iii OPEN FORUM continued

Further advice can be found at:

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/smoke-and-bonfires/> and
<https://www.gov.uk/garden-bonfires-rules>

2025-09/05 COUNCILLOR CLIVE HOOKER – MEMBERS’ BID

District Councillor Clive Hooker was inviting applications for Members’ Bid funding to support community projects. Applications may be made for up to 60% of the total project cost, with the Parish Council required to contribute the remaining 40%.

RESOLVED to confirm the Parish Council’s application for the installation of a Vehicle Activated Sign on Hungerford Hill, to replace the unit previously removed as faulty. Anticipated cost £5,086 (60% grant = £3,051, 40% GSPC = £2,034).

2025-09/06 CO-OPTION OF A PARISH COUNCILLOR

Councillors considered an application from Steve Bullock, for the vacancy for a Parish Councillor. Councillors discussed with Mr Bullock his interest and reasons for wishing to join the Parish Council.

RESOLVED to co-opt Mr Steve Bullock to serve on Great Shefford Parish Council.

Councillors welcomed Steve to the Council and he took a seat at the table but did not vote on any matters.

2025-09/07 PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

Following discussions at previous meetings, the following update from West Berkshire Council Highways Officer, Gareth Dowding, as noted:

“The proposal for a zebra crossing was discussed with the Portfolio Holder and we have been asked to investigate additional pedestrian warning signs first before looking at a crossing assessment.

I believe the main reason for this is because a zebra crossing with Great Shefford would require street lighting to be provided, which has its own additional issues.”

Councillors appreciated that additional warning signs would be investigated and would welcome the installation, however, remained concerned that these may not be visible without street lighting.

RESOLVED to pursue a site meeting and to obtain indicative costs for the installation of street lighting at this location.

2025-09/08 RISK MANAGEMENT

Councillors reviewed a draft Risk Management Strategy 2025/26, comprising of a Risk Register and Risk Assessment.

RESOLVED to adopt the Risk Management Strategy 2025/26, as presented, and to prepare a ‘checklist’ to ensure all actions were undertaken.

2025-09/09 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Updates on new planning applications and decisions since the last meeting were noted, as detailed at the end of these minutes.

2025-09/10 FINANCE**RESOLVED** to approve the following payments:

Payee	Amount	Invoice reference / date	Description
Tactical Facilities Management	£253.86 (£211.55 + VAT)	SI-3916 24.07.2025	Waste removal & Litter Picking – July 2025
Tactical Facilities Management	£217.01 (£180.84 + VAT)	SI-3993 24.07.2025	Monthly grounds maintenance – July 2025
Tactical Facilities Management	£217.01 (£180.84 + VAT)	SI-4097 24.08.2025	Monthly grounds maintenance – August 2025
Tactical Facilities Management	£253.86 (£211.55 + VAT)	SI-4169 24.08.2025	Waste removal & Litter Picking – August 2025
Westcotec	£6,103.20 (£5,086 + VAT)	17017 22.07.2025	Speed Indicator Device – installed on Wantage Road. £2,232 to be reclaimed from WBC for Members' Bid award
M Taylor	£43.47		Parish Clerk's expenses reimbursement (ID holders + lanyards, push pins for noticeboard, lever arch file + dividers, No Dogs signs, 1 st Aid kit + dog foul bags)
M Taylor	£658.60		Parish Clerk's Salary – August 2025 (inc Income Tax reimbursement of £176.20)

RESOLVED to ratify payment of £1,297.26 to M Taylor for the Parish Clerk's Salary for May, June & July 2025. Payment authorised and processed by Councillors Armstrong and Freeman. Delay in payment due to HMRC PAYE registration process.

Council noted that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) had reached agreement on rates of pay applicable from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. In accordance with the terms of the Parish Clerk's contract of employment, the award had been implemented, increasing the rate for LC1 SCP17 from £15.58 per hour to £16.08 per hour.

Councillors reviewed a budget report for the period 1st April 2025 – 31st August 2025. The forecast overspend was discussed and noted, along with the requirement for increased play area maintenance budgets in future years, due to aging play equipment. It was agreed to investigate estimated costs for replacement play equipment, and to prepare draft future budgets, including a comparison of precepts of similar sized local councils.

RESOLVED Insurance quotes for the year commencing 1st October 2025 were considered. to renew the Council's insurance with Ecclesiastical, via Clear Councils broker, at a cost of £1,141.24 [for 1-year] but to seek a reduction by entering into a 3-year agreement¹.

¹ Post meeting note: £1,111.03 for year 1 of a 3-year agreement

2025-09/10 FINANCE continued

The Parish Clerk provided an update on the long-running dispute with SSE regarding street lighting overcharges, advising that the previous complaint handler had left and transferred the matter to a colleague who, after initial communication, had not responded to recent emails. It was agreed that as this complaint had been running for over two years, to refer the matter to the Ombudsman.

2025-09/11 PLAY AREA AND RECREATION GROUND REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

- i. Council noted the first Sovereign Compliance Report following an inspection on 14th July 2025.
- ii. Councillors considered a report from the Parish Clerk regarding repairs and maintenance.

RESOLVED to note the Parish Clerk's comments and recommendations and to approve expenditure of up to £2,500 for essential repairs.

- iii. Council noted that instruction had been issued to Tactical Facilities Management to undertake weed removal around the safety surfacing of play equipment at a cost of £125, to be funded from the 'grounds maintenance reactive' budget.

2025-09/12 VILLAGE MATTERS**i. Traffic calming and speed awareness**

Things were going very well. Three new sites had recently been approved, including Church Street heading towards Lambourn, and Newbury Road by the telephone exchange. In a recent session on the Wantage Road, 18 of 150 vehicles were recorded speeding, and an additional 18 were recorded as being 10% over the speed limit.

Council acknowledged the work of all the SpeedWatch volunteers and thanked them for their efforts.

Council agreed to acknowledge Claire Coard for her key role in several community activities, such as regular speed monitoring and tackling dog fouling, and to recognise her contribution with a small thank-you gift.

ii. Forthcoming roadwork notification

There were no forthcoming roadwork notifications at the time of the meeting.

iii. Village signage

Council reviewed costs for 'No dogs' signage for the recreation ground and agreed that the off-the-shelf signs were adequate and Councillor Coard would erect these at the entrance.

Councillor Coard suggested installing a noticeboard at the entrance to the recreation ground to alleviate notices on the vehicle access gate and it was agreed to obtain a cost.

2025-09/12 VILLAGE MATTERS continued

iv. Community Clean Up Day – 1st August 2025

Councillor Turner provided an overview of the volunteer community clean-up day on Friday 1st August 2025. It was agreed to host twice a year, with the next in spring 2026, and to try a Saturday, 2pm – 5pm, to see if that attracted more participants.

v. Flood Alleviation Scheme and SAGLUV (Sewage Action Group for the Lambourn Upper Valley)

A meeting with Thames Water representatives was held recently, and good communication continued. Lots of work that had been identified had been successfully completed, and further work had been identified. A bulletin was due to be published in the coming days.

vi. Village Events

Date of next community litter pick – Sunday 12th October 2025, 10am – 12pm, meet at the Village Hall.

Councillor Turner reported that she was scheduled to meet with the Sports & Social Club to confirm details for a Halloween activity on 31st October and the Christmas tree lighting event on 29th November.

It was reiterated that the Halloween activity was not a Parish Council event, but the Parish Council would support the Sports & Social Club.

The Parish Council would provide mulled wine and mince pies for the Christmas event, and arrange the Christmas tree, funded from the Council's 'Events' budget. The Sports & Social Club would arrange the barbecue, movie, games etc.

vii. Village Communications – Website, Facebook etc

The new website was still work-in-progress but nearing completion. Councillors' formal Council email addresses were imminent.

viii. Future Councillor 'Meet & Greet'

At the Halloween and Christmas events.

2025-09/13 COUNCILLORS' BUSINESS

- a)** A concern raised at the last meeting, regarding tree roots pushing up the surface of the footpath linking Station Road and Wantage Road, behind Mill Cottage, was reported to West Berkshire Council and the following response was received:

"We have inspected your enquiry and have assessed that no further action is required at this time. Reported defects that do not meet our investigatory levels are not forgotten and can be recorded on our system for possible future works. We continue to check highway condition during planned safety inspections to ensure that defects have not worsened to the point where they now pose a hazard to highway users."

Council noted the response.

- b)** A hedge-line at the junction of Newbury Road (from Boxford) and Hungerford Hill was impeding the sight line of traffic emerging onto Hungerford Hill.

2025-09/13 COUNCILLORS' BUSINESS continued

- c) Residents had reported finding discarded used needles by the river and had been advised to report to the Police. It was agreed to seek advice from the Neighbourhood Police Team.
- d) Recent comments on social media regarding the railings on the corner of Newbury Road and Hungerford Hill were noted.

2025-09/14 MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

There was nothing at this time.

2025-09/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 6th October 2025 at 7.30pm.

Subsequent meeting dates for 2025/26: 3rd November, 5th January, 2nd February, 2nd March, 6th April and 11th May.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.34pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Application No.	Address	Details	Status	GSPC response
25/00567/FUL	Land East of The Old Post House Newbury Road Shefford Woodlands	Erection of an Agricultural Barn with storage	Approved	Nil
25/01267/CERTP	Apple Tree Cottage, Station Road	Erection of a single storey side extension, 3m (L) and full width of house with pitched roof. Erection of porch canopy	Split decision Porch – lawful permitted development Single storey extension – planning permission required	Nil
25/01601/FUL & 25/01602/LBC	Swan Inn Newbury Road	Alterations and renovations to the existing building, demolition and single-storey replacement of part. Associated external works	Awaiting decision	** see below
25/01631/COND	Shefford House Newbury Road	Approval of details reserved by condition 5 biodiversity, 9 CEMP and 10 LEMP of planning permission 24/02716/HOUSE	Awaiting decision	Nil
25/01642/AGRIC	Newtown Lodge Farm Shefford Woodlands	To determine if prior approval is required for a proposed steel portal framed general purpose building	Awaiting decision	Nil
25/01738/PIP	Land west of Barndown House Baydon Road Shefford Woodlands	Permission in principle for residential development (including demolition of existing buildings) comprising the erection of a minimum of 2 and maximum of 2 dwellings	Awaiting decision	Support

****** The Parish Council fully support this application and are looking forward to having the community brought together again in their local, which has been an integral part of the village for years.