



Minutes of a meeting of Great Shefford Parish Council held on Monday 3rd November 2025 at 7.30pm at Great Shefford Village Hall

Present: Councillor Piers Storey (Chairman)
Councillors Miranda Armstrong, Steven Bullock and Tony Coard

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Parish Clerk)
District Councillor Clive Hooker
1 member of public

2025-11/01 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jessica Copcutt, Louisa Freeman and Carol Turner.

2025-11/02 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Armstrong declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item number 4ii (2025-11/04ii) as proprietor of The Swan Inn (formerly The Great Shefford Inn), Newbury Road.

2025-11/03 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2025 as a true and accurate record.

2025-11/04 **OPEN FORUM**

- i. A request on behalf of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) had been received after publication of the agenda, requesting grant funding to upgrade the lighting in St. Mary's Church and it was agreed to add this to the agenda for the next meeting.
- ii. A resident expressed concern at poor visibility when crossing Wantage Road from the pub side to the bridge, due to a fence obstructing the view of traffic. It is understood that the fence was installed 3 or 4 years ago by the former pub landlord. A dropped kerb already exists at this point for accessibility.
It was agreed that the Parish Council would discuss the matter with the new owner of the pub and seek the opinion of West Berkshire Council Highways Officers.
- iii. A resident expressed concern regarding local drainage infrastructure with particular emphasis on the culvert under the petrol station, where debris (e.g. branches) could cause blockages and increase flood risk. It was noted that existing grilles at The Mead already filtered some debris before this point. The resident also expressed concern at the risk of flooding in the event of a major weather incident, where three water courses combine, and highlighted the importance of ensuring the sluice gate remained operational.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would seek advice from the Environment Agency and West Berkshire Council through a site meeting to understand the risks and any potential remedial actions.

iv. District Councillor Clive Hooker provided the following updates:

East Garston: Sewer lining project completed – congratulations extended to Martin Wright and SAGLUV. Monitoring continues, with assessment of private drains feeding into the system to follow in the next phase.

Unitary Council Proposal: Full Council to consider submission to Government regarding proposed merger of West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse authorities (total population approx. 498,000). Expected outcomes include significant restructuring costs, staff reduction and reduction in number of Unitary Councillors. Wards expected to remain unchanged. Elections would be held in 2027, with the new council initially shadowing before taking over in 2028. Discussions ongoing regarding Local Plans, location of the Unitary Council and whether there would be a Mayor.

Service Delivery Offers to Town and Parish Councils: A revised Service Delivery programme was launched at the recent District Parish Conference, with Pop-Up Libraries being promoted, to encourage social interaction. Packages could potentially be adaptable to parish budgets.

Pedestrian Crossing: Councillor Coard provided Councillor Hooker with an overview of the recent site meeting, as discussed at the last meeting of the Parish Council.

Speed Review Programme: Consultations underway, the position of Great Shefford within the programme was not currently known.

2025-11/05 PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

At the previous meeting, it was agreed to request that West Berkshire Council assess the potential relocation of the school bus stop, along with improvements to road and highway signage. Councillor Armstrong suggested an alternative location for a pedestrian crossing on the A338, opposite the existing bus stop, noting good sight lines in both directions, although there was currently no street lighting and a footpath would be required. Following discussion, it was agreed not to include the alternative crossing location in the current request to West Berkshire Council at this time, but to focus on speed reduction and signage improvements.

2025-11/06 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following updates on new planning applications and decisions since the last meeting were noted:

Application No.	Address	Details	Status	GSPC response
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	Approved	Support
25/01742/HOUSE	Winterbourne Cottage, Wantage Road	Rear extension	Approved	Nil
25/01800/FULMAJ	Land to the west of Spring Meadows	Proposed 16no. dwellings, new access, public open space and landscaping	Awaiting decision	As per Minutes of previous meeting
25/01876/FUL	Pheasant Inn, Ermin Street, Shefford Woodlands	Erection of new metal frame retractable roof pergola	Approved	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	Approved	Support
25/01742/HOUSE	Winterbourne Cottage, Wantage Road	Rear extension	Approved	Nil

2025-11/07 FINANCE

RESOLVED to approve the following payments:

Payee	Amount	Invoice reference / date	Description
Tactical Facilities Management	£253.86 (£211.55+VAT)	SI-4467 26.10.2025	Waste removal & Litter Picking – October 2025
Tactical Facilities Management	£217.01 (£180.84+VAT)	SI-4512 26.10.2025	Monthly grounds maintenance – October 2025
Tactical Facilities Management	£510.00 (£425+VAT)	SI-4423 20.10.2025	Play park repairs and hedge cutting
Cloud Next	£59.98 (£49.99+VAT)	254185 26.09.2025	Annual hosting cost of greatsheffordparish.gov.uk for emails and website
Cloud Next	£60.00 (£50.00+VAT)	254754 05.10.2025	Annual cost of ownership of domain greatsheffordparish.gov.uk
Great Shefford Village Hall	£150.00	06.10.2025	Hall hire for Council meetings April-Oct 2025 (6 @ £25)
Infinity Playgrounds	£2,566 (£2,155+VAT)	INV-01701 30.10.2025	Play Area repairs
M Taylor	£468.60		Parish Clerk's Salary – October 2025

2025-11/07 FINANCE continued

- b) A budget report for the period 1st April 2025 – 31st October 2025 was noted.
- c) There were no updates to the second draft budget for 2026/27. Councillors were asked to inform the Parish Clerk of any projects they wished to undertake in 2026/27, before the January meeting, to allow for funding to be included in the final draft budget prior to adoption.
- d) There were no updates regarding the ongoing dispute with SSE over street lighting charges, and it was agreed to proceed with referral to the Ombudsman.
A quotation from Utility Aid for a new unmetered supply contract for street lighting had not been received at the time of the meeting and was deferred to the next meeting.
- e) A request for funding had been received from the Editor of Great Shefford Parish News, to produce a hardcopy Christmas edition. The edition aimed to support and promote community organisations and activities, following concerns that reduced engagement may be due to a lack of awareness. It was proposed that the inside front and back covers include contact details of local businesses and organisations, to serve as a community reference throughout 2026.

Quotes had been obtained for the preparation and printing of 450 x A5 copies (28 pages, full colour) as follows:

90gsm paper – £397 (+VAT) OR 100gsm paper – £445 (+VAT)

PLUS getting the newsletter 'print ready' = £60

RESOLVED to approve expenditure of up to £500 for the production of a printed edition of the Christmas newsletter, funded from the Printing/Newsletter budget, and to ask whether the businesses being promoted would be making a financial contribution towards the cost.

- f) It was noted that an application for a Members' Bid grant from West Berkshire District Councillor Clive Hooker, for repairs and maintenance of the play area / recreation ground, was successful with an award of £2,571.

2025-11/08 PARISH COUNCIL POSTAL ADDRESS

It was noted with thanks that the Trustees of Great Shefford Village Hall had kindly agreed that the Parish Council may use the village hall as its postal address and had requested upgrade of the current inadequate postbox on the porch exterior.

RESOLVED to agree expenditure of up to £50 to purchase a replacement postbox and that Councillor Coard shall install.

2025-11/09 WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL SERVICE DELIVERY OPPORTUNITIES

It was noted that West Berkshire Council had published an updated programme of service delivery offers for Parish and Town Councils.

2025-11/10 VILLAGE MATTERS

i. **Traffic calming and speed awareness**

Councillor Bullock circulated the first data reports from the speed monitoring device on Wantage Road. The question of whether a schedule of monitoring dates could be produced was raised, noting that activity had reduced recently, while acknowledging that factors such as weather, shorter daylight hours, and volunteer availability can contribute to this. It was agreed to request that a programme of dates be set to maintain momentum.

ii. **Forthcoming roadwork notification**

Noted: 17th November 2025, Hungerford Hill to outside 'The Glebe', 9.30am to 3.30pm to enable BT Openreach to undertake pole testing.

iii. **Village signage**

Nothing at this time.

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

Councillor Freeman had attended a meeting the previous week, which had been productive and positive.

v. **Village Events**

The Halloween event held the previous week had been reasonably well attended, after a quiet start. The activities were very good and well received, although some might have benefited from being guided or led by volunteers. It was agreed that more advanced advertising was needed for future events, including the forthcoming Christmas Tree light switch-on.

Councillor Hooker and 1 member of public left the meeting

Thanks were recorded to all those involved in the Halloween event.

Councillor Storey recommended agreeing an annual programme of events to be published at the start of each calendar year.

Councillor Armstrong suggested that the Parish Council should focus on one 'showcase' event each year, namely the Christmas activity.

The Parish Clerk advised that sponsorship had been sought for the Christmas Tree but no response had been received. The tree was due to be delivered on 21st November, with the lights switch-on event scheduled for Saturday 29th November.

vi. **Village Communications – Website, Facebook etc**

The new website was nearing completion, and a link had been circulated to Councillors for feedback. It was noted that it was not functioning properly on a mobile device.

It was agreed that a card or poster with the Parish Council's contact details would be useful; containing email address, website, social media etc, along with details of what the Parish Council does.

vii. Bulbs from North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust

It was noted that 1,500 bulbs received from North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust, were planted at the recreation ground on Tuesday 21st October.

2025-11/11 COUNCILLORS' BUSINESS

Nothing at this time.

2025-11/12 MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Funding application from St Mary's Church for a lighting project.

'Village Security' carried forward from July 2025 meeting.

2025-11/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 5th January 2026, at 7.30pm.

Subsequent meeting dates: 2nd February 2026, 2nd March 2026,

13th April 2026 (*) and 11th May 2026.

(*) previously advertised as 6th April, changed to 13th as 6th is Easter Monday Bank Holiday

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DRAFT