

FOREST HILL WITH SHOTOVER PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
Thursday 11th September 2025 at 7.00pm in Forest Hill Village Hall

Present: Cllrs A Waite Brown (Chair), G Blomley, G Shepherd, J Stutfield,
T Molloy, J Hobbins

In Attendance: S Cox, Clerk/RFO and Cllr T Bearder, OCC and SODC

Members of the Public: Two

No.	Item
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89.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – DW - received and accepted.
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90.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - To receive requests for declarations of interests from Councillors relating to items on the agenda. Reminder of the six-month rule for non-attendance of meetings. JS declared an interest in the Baby and Toddler Group and grants.
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91.	PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL DOCUMENTS to review:
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1.	Standing Orders 2025 – postponed to next meeting.
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The documents will be added to the website under Policies and Governance when they have been reviewed.

92.	PUBLIC FORUM – To facilitate public participation.
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Members of the public are welcome to raise matters of concern or ask questions of the council.

- Visit by Keir construction regarding water works work – Keir did not attend the meeting as they are holding a Public Meeting on 16th September at the Village Hall.
- Two residents from Mickle Way are taking over the gardening club duties from PL and will look after the village planters. There is money from the Gardening Club, but a decision has not been made on what to do with it yet. PC to approve at the next meeting. The PC could hold the balance of funds after any expenditure. The crack in the planter has been reported to Highways, and they are monitoring it and will repair when necessary. Garden Waste – speak to JB about the allotment compost heap. Bench – the Garden Club would like a new metal bench for people to sit on and look at the flowers. Garden Club money could be used for this. Garden Club to look for suitable benches and get a quote for the next PC meeting. Garden Club would like to plant a Cherry tree on the grass at Mickle Way and to plant bulbs on the Green. No 2 Mickle Way – items left on the pavement outside the house are a hazard to pedestrians. White Gates – the plants cover up the gates and traffic is more likely to slow down if they can be seen. Could put a 20 mph sign on the planters? The PC is keen to improve the look of the village. The PC thanked the two residents for taking on the planters.

93.	BUS SERVICE and TRANSPORT:
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- Next PTR Meeting on Tuesday 11th November at 1.30 pm via Teams – email from Tim Darch circulated to PC.

- Red Rose Travel 108 Bus - new timetable from Monday 21st July 2025 to include stops at Rectory Farm – feedback from bus users. AWB phoned the bus company three times to complain about the driver not sticking to the timetable and buses leaving early and passengers missing the bus. The bus from Forest Hill to Rectory Farm went through Stanton St John and drove the wrong way up the one-way road. Cllr Bearder informed the PC that there had been a change of driver recently. **Action:** Clerk to write to Red Rose and copy TB who will speak to DH at OCC.
- 94. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL** held on Thursday 7th August 2025 and previously circulated. Agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.
- 95. UPDATES ON PROGRESS FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING –** Chairman/Clerk to report on progress of outstanding items that do not require further decision.
- The wall at St Nicolas Old Cemetery, Main Street, Forest Hill – email from HO received with updates. Copy of structural engineer’s report requested for PC records. Clerk to chase again.
 - Steps by the Church and weeds – no reply yet from FMS
 - Church Hill and verges – work postponed until November - cancel.
 - Poppy Wreath – ordered.
 - New FixMyStreet updates on report: 'Loose drain cover' – Action scheduled within 28 days – resolved.
- 96. OCC and SODC MATTERS –** To receive reports from the County Councillor and District Councillor:
- Stanton Road, Forest Hill – a resident from Stanton St John has written to the PC about the cars and vans parked on the Stanton Road making it difficult for the bus and agricultural vehicles to get through as there are no passing places and no room to manoeuvre. Cllr Bearder suggested chicanes or double yellow lines could be considered. The drain cover on Stanton Road has now been fixed. The A40 Layby will be closed in November 2025. There will be a lane closure for the clear up. The Sanitisation Team will clean up the layby after it has been closed. OCC look after Highways and SODC will deal with the rubbish. TB has sent links for grant funding to JS for the Baby and Toddler Group. On 22nd September there is a meeting on Local Government Reorganisation at Beckley Village Hall. A40 gate consultation to legalise locking the gate. PC concerned there would be no access for emergency vehicles. The gate has been locked, and Emergency Services cut the lock, but no one relocks the gate. If the gate were locked permanently, a Fire Engine from Wheatley would take longer. OCC will relock the gate if Emergency Services cut the lock. Clerk to respond to the consultation with no objections to the gate being locked so long as there is access for Emergency Services. Congestion and Traffic Filters on six points around Oxford resulting in a 10% time saving for bus journeys by December 2025. The scheme was unable to go ahead previously due to the Botley Road closure. There will be a £5 charge instead to try and meet the 10% saving. There needs to be a shift away from cars to other forms of transport hence the £5 charge for going through a filter. Trying to engender a modal shift to other forms of transport. Automated number plate recognition for pre-registration. Twenty-five permits can be applied for, and they last 24 hours and are digital. Designated to close off cross-town travel. The Scheme was approved on Wednesday by OCC. Gully clearances in April – a

significant number had collapsed as they have not been maintained. False economy to not maintain the gullies and keep them flushed out.

97. PLANNING – To consider all recent applications received and to report notifications and decisions from South Oxfordshire District Council – all previously circulated.

98. FINANCE – To receive, approve, consider, and review the following:

a) Balances at bank:

Current Account – Nat West	£5,084.15	at 31.07.25
Unity Current Account	£11,320.50	at 31.08.25
Unity Reserve Account – (2.25 %)	£33,544.54	at 31.08.25
Sub Total	£49,949.19	

Less: Unpresented cheques	£50.50
Plus: unpresented receipts	£0
Sub Total	£49898.69

Less: Earmarked general reserves	£10,000.00
Less: Earmarked reserves - traffic calming	<u>£30,000.00</u>

Total available funds	£9,898.69
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CIL balance	£27,278.17
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<u>Receipts included in above figure</u>	£0
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b) Payment requests – by Online Banking, DD, or Cheque

Admin to the Parish Council – September	£563.43
Admin to the Parish Council – HMRC Q2	£455.51
Working from Home Allowance for Clerk - qtr.	£26.00
Unity Service Charge – August	£6.00
Tactical Facilities Management Ltd – Aug waste	£65.00
Tactical Facilities Management Ltd – Aug ground	£495.00
Moore – External Auditor's fee 2024/25 audit	£252.00

c) Scribe Reports: Bank Reconciliations as at 31.08.25

- Chair to approve and sign – resolved.

d) To consider the Summary of Receipts and Payments against Budget Report up to end August 2025 – resolved.

e) Internal Financial Control check:

- April to June – JS to complete – resolved.

f) AGAR 2024/25: the following documents have been published on the website under Finance:

1. The audited versions of the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement.
2. The auditor's certificate and opinion.
3. Any public interest report (none), or other recommendation of the auditor.

4. A form of Notice of Conclusion of Annual Audit.

g) To consider the costings of a mobile phone against the Switchboard Free! Premium rate service – AWB. We have a premium rate number now and receive one call a month usually from a business or the grave digger. Two options – continue with the small fees which are paid by the Chairman or have a 01865 number to an App for £5 per month. We would have to change the phone numbers on signs etc. Agree to stay with the existing arrangement – resolved.

h) To consider closing the Nat West Bank account and using the Switch service to transfer the funds to Unity Trust Bank – forms to sign at the October meeting.

i) To consider the Office 365 renewal invoice received for £1100.00 from SP1 Solutions. The renewal is due in February, but the invoice has been sent in July. **Action:** AWB. Agreed to move away from Office 365.

j) To consider the email received from My Parish Council with a quote for £156 per year for a new website. We have a .org.uk email address and would like to move to a .gov.uk email address. AWB has spoken to various companies about a new website and has found one with a planning tracker and links to FMS etc. This includes all email addresses. Cost of migration £400 and cost for first year would be £648.00. The PC would manage the website in the background. Agreed by the PC to change to the new website and email service. The PC has an IT policy on the existing website.

k) Receipt: second half Precept for 2025/26 £10,175.00 – payment received 05/09/25.

l) To consider: a quote from TEEC Ltd to migrate to a new email and web platform. The migration is a one-off cost – see item J above.

m) Clerk to write to Lincoln College to ask if they would entertain selling the Village Hall to the Parish Council.

n) Clerk to inform TFM that invoices will not be paid until photographs proving when the work has been completed are received. GS to sort out the areas of grass that have not been mown.

o) The PC discussed placing an advert in the Four Parishes Magazine for a local person to do village maintenance and mowing of the children's play area every two weeks, the cemetery every two weeks, and the Rec once a month. The person could be self-employed and use their own equipment and have Public Liability insurance. A DBS check would be required. To discuss again and make a draft advert for the magazine.

99. CLERK / RFO:

- **Received:** a letter from Moore with signed External Audit Report to accompany the AGAR for the year ended 31st March 2025 – noted.
- **To consider** a new logo to add to paperwork and any signs, website, email etc, designed by AWB – PC suggested having an open village competition to design a new logo with a book token for the winner.

100. SECTION 137 EXPENDITURE: None.

101. VILLAGE and PARISH MATTERS:

- Defibrillator – monthly check for Clerk to update The Circuit website.
- Defibrillator - Annual Reminder: Your Defibrillator's Batteries & Pads Need Checking and Replacing – checked and all ok.
- Solar Lighting and Bus Shelter maintenance – reply from Alex Collett at Solar Lighting Solutions and a quote. AWB to monitor the lights and check in the winter. May need new batteries.
- Winter Preparedness – order for salt bags and salt bins, if required – reply by September. Salt bins to be refilled only – one at Shotover to do. Clerk to reply to OCC.
- **To consider** a grant to the Baby and Toddler group if a grant is not available from SODC or OCC. The PC agreed to promise a £100 grant if no other grants are available.
- **To consider** purchasing a silhouette soldier for VE/VJ Day for £175 from Royal British Legion Industries. Agreed – Clerk to order for payment approval at the October meeting. Storage of the soldier - tbc
- **To consider** the Consultation on A40 gate being left open - Objections to the proposals and other representations specifying the grounds on which they are made may be sent in writing to OCC by 12 September 2025. **Action:** Clerk to reply to the consultation.
- **To consider** the diversion of the bridleway at Bayswater Farm, Sandhills - reply by Friday 12th September 2025. *Application for diversions of bridleway 215/1/80 under S257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Land at Bayswater Farm, Bayswater Farm Road near Barton OX3 8EB.* **Action:** Clerk to reply to the consultation to say the PC objects to the diversion of the bridleway at Bayswater Farm.
- **To consider:** TFM and recent dog bin emptying schedule and updated verge map – ongoing.
- **To receive:** feedback from the Village Maintenance meeting with TFM and AWB and GS. The meeting was positive and should improve communications.
- **To consider** an email from OGBN with an opportunity to register an objection now to becoming part of Greater Oxford after 2028 – noted. There is a public meeting on 22nd September at 7.00 pm at Beckley Village Hall where all three parties will speak. It would be useful for Cllrs to attend to understand the Greater Oxford proposal. **Action:** To decide at the next meeting on a response to OGBN.
- **To consider** an email from Reuben at Lone Star Land Ltd asking if the Parish Council would be interested in meeting to discuss the next steps for the land at Sandhills (the bridleway diversion and the reserved matters application) and to see if the Parish Council would want to be involved in any way. The PC are willing to meet in the Village Hall at 6.30 pm on the dates available and to involve Risinghurst and Sandhills PC. AWB to create a sub-committee that Sandhills PC could join.

102. VILLAGE HALL – To receive a report and updates

a. Managing Trustees report – September 2025

Current account balance	£7239.02
Deposit account balance	<u>£2964.48</u>

Total Reserves £10,203.50

Nothing to report this month.

b. **To consider** the VHC's proposals from the last meeting and decide:

- Repointing brickwork
- Replace the window above the stage.
- Electrical – to replace the consumer unit.
- To replace the hot air blowers.
- To replace the clock and the electrical supply.
- The RCD is not necessary and trips when people are in the hall. This can be removed.
- Replace light units with LEDs which are more efficient and no tubes to replace.
- Hot air blowers – replace and in the kitchen for variable output heaters.
- Wi-Fi – there are no deals from Gigaclear at present.

JS to contact Cllr Tim Bearder for grant money as he has encouraged the PC to apply for grants previously. Re-pointing to be discussed at the next meeting in October. Air conditioning for the village hall – hot and cold – would support the community during adverse weather conditions.

103. RECREATION GROUND:

a) Changing facilities – update and decision following site meeting – three Cllrs attended a site meeting and found the container to be in good condition. The PC were in favour of sending the container to the Cricket Club and that is still the plan, or we tell the Cricket Club that we have changed our mind. There used to be a Sports and Social Club that ran events for the village. The Football Club wanted to expand and wanted changing facilities. They approached the PC to raise £50k in grants with a long-term backing. PC was assured it was there for the long term. The PC raised the money and the Football Club closed after two years. The container costs the PC money to maintain. The money came from Sport England grants. The PC discussed repurposing the container and JH approached Stanton St John to repurpose it there on their cricket ground. A proposal was put to both PCs that the container could be repurposed at SSJ. FH and SSJ approved the proposal informally. The Cricket Club have used the container for storage, and it has been used for village events. The single-phase electric and water supply on the Rec can be kept if necessary. Both services are disconnected now. Confirmation given that there is no asbestos. Cllrs queried the legality of the disposal of an asset. Clerk to check with OALC the legality and process of disposing of an asset. The PC agreed informally to let SSJ use the container and made a commitment to move it. At the time it was mutually beneficial to both villages to exchange FOC and at zero cost to the PC. If we keep the container – what is its purpose? The plan to move the container would be in September 2026. Cllrs asked if we have to offer the asset to other interested parties? What do we have to do to reverse a previous decision or vote? Clerk to look through the minutes and search for any decision to move the container and speak to OALC. To discuss again at the next meeting.

b) Routine Monthly Playground Inspection and actions required – resolved.

c) Hole in the fence on the Rec – update from AWB – we would need to extend the fence or block the holes. There is a den in the hedge and children

could get out onto the road. AWB to order more picket fencing. We could put up a fence along the end.

d) The Play Inspection Company – annual inspection report received. The wooden fence is mentioned in the report and AWB will look to replace the posts. The report overall was low risk. The boat is medium risk, and the equipment is getting old. AWB to get a quote for remediation work. AWB to get a quote for cleaning the play equipment. To consider replacement of the swing seats.

104. CEMETERY: to receive a report, updates and matters for consideration:

- Mowing and upkeep of the Cemetery – report from - GB/GS – the mowing has been fine but has not been done today.
- Asset Register – record title number for cemetery on asset register – JS is working on this.
- Burial plots in our parish cemetery – enquiry about reservations for Muslim graves and any further advice received. All graves face East in the FH cemetery. JS has emailed a funeral director for answers to questions and what we must commit ourselves to. Logistics – can we do it? There are to be no plot reservations. GB contacted a Mosque, and they did not have a name for a grave digger.
- Wooden cross marker request – resolved by GB – noted.
- Mowing over flowers and plants on a grave – TFM have been asked not to do this again and the family have been informed.

105. ALLOTMENTS: to receive any updates and matters for consideration:

- Perimeter fence – following a site meeting.
- AWB to ask JB to get some quotes for the perimeter fence.

106. OALC / NALC - all updates previously circulated.

107. INFORMATION and CORRESPONDENCE – all circulated when received:

- Thames Water and Sewage Treatment Works – letter to residents and a drop-in session at the village hall – date 16th September.
- Beckley and Stowood Parish Council - Invitation to Speak at a Public Meeting on Local Government Reform at 7pm at Beckley Village Hall on Monday 22nd September.
- Beckley and Stowood Parish Council - CPRE Petition to Change the Definition of the Grey Belt.
- Beckley and Stowood Parish Council - Local Government Reorganization: Greater Oxford Proposal.
- INITITAL Consultation – Banbury, Carterton, Didcot & Oxford - Proposed Experimental School Streets (Phase 3) & ANPR Enforcement – comments by Friday 13th October 2025.
- Community Governance Review 2025/2026 - submit any requests for matters to be considered with supporting evidence by Friday 12 September 2025.
- Invitation to AGM of Citizens Advice Oxfordshire.
- Highways Depot Open Day - 27 September 2025 for Parish Councils.
- Application for diversions of bridleway 215/1/80 under S257 of the Town and

Country Planning Act 1990 Land at Bayswater Farm Bayswater Farm Road near Barton OX3 8EB.

- Oxford Vaccine Group - Advertising for the BiVISTA Study.
- SODC - Have your say on our Licensing Act Policy consultation – closes 16th October 2025.

108. Items for next Agenda: all items for the next agenda to be submitted to the Clerk by 1st October 2025.

109. DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING:

- A meeting of the Parish Council will be held on the second Thursday of each month. Next meeting on **Thursday 9th October 2025** at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall at Forest Hill.
- **Agendas and Minutes** are available on the notice boards and website: [Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council | Home \(parish-council.com\)](http://Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council | Home (parish-council.com))
- Meeting closed at 21:30.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Chairman:

Date: