

**FOREST HILL WITH SHOTOVER PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October 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, D Waters

**In Attendance:** S Cox, Clerk/RFO

**Members of the Public:** six

**No. Item**

**110. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – None.

**111. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – JS declared an interest in the Village Hall item on the agenda.

**112. PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL DOCUMENTS to review:**

1. Standing Orders 2025 – postponed to next meeting.

The documents will be added to the website under Policies and Governance when they have been reviewed.

**113. PUBLIC FORUM** – The public have 10 minutes in total to speak and a maximum of 5 minutes each. Two members of the Garden Club gave a report on their plans to plant daffodil and crocus bulbs, painting the planter boxes white and keeping the plants low with pansies and violas to keep the gates visible. One member of the public commented on the Green Box and felt it was not a good idea to get rid of it and it should be put to villagers to see if we want it or not. It is a good asset and not a good idea to give it away.

**114. BUS SERVICE and TRANSPORT:**

- Operations Manager - Response to Concerns Regarding Red Rose Bus Service. The bus company will investigate any issues raised by passengers. Passengers are asked to keep an eye on the bus if it is early or late and report back to the Parish Council.
- Red Rose bus and parked vehicles on Stanton Road – no pull in. A couple of residents mentioned that there is nowhere for the bus to pull into. The bus stops in the road. The bus company could speak to Highways. PC to monitor if parking is an issue in the village.
- Tim Darch, OCC - BetterPoints Oxfordshire App. Promotes active travel and can collect points that can be redeemed for rewards.
- Tim Darch, OCC - OxRAIL 2040 – Cowley branch line to Oxford and possible re-opening.
- Next PTR Meeting on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November at 1.30 pm via Teams – email from Tim Darch circulated to PC. Members of the PC are welcome to attend this online meeting.

**115. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL** held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025 and previously circulated. Not agreed and not signed. Clerk to add in a comment from GS that had been omitted from the September minutes that there was a decision on the Rec and a unanimous vote a long time ago and this was said by the Chairman at the September meeting. The PC (AWB) applied for the grant. The Sports and Social Club did the work. The project was a joint effort spearheaded by the Sports and Social Club and sorted and applied for by the Parish Council in 2013.

**116. 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 – Copy of structural engineer’s report requested for PC records – item closed. Clerk to send a copy of the email correspondence to JS with reference to the Church.
- Steps by the Church and weeds – no reply from FMS.
- 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 – feedback from Cllrs who attended the meeting. AWB, JH and JS attended the meeting for two hours. The proposal is to disband the County Council, District and City Councils into a new Unitary Council. OCC deliver 85% of public services currently and SODC provide 15% of the services. PCs contribute 1%. A Unitary Council would save money more efficiently. There are three proposals to go to the Secretary of State:
  - One big OCC, and SODC would not exist. Absorb the 15% from SODC.
  - Two Unitaries for North and South – Ridgeway and West Berks, Cherwell, and West Oxfordshire.
  - Greater Oxford – two unitaries plus a Greater Oxford City Council.
  - The Leader of OCC spoke first, followed by SODC for the second option, and then Oxford City Council on the third option.
  - PC or community groups were mentioned and a Thames Valley Mayor to oversee strategic decisions on housing. The PC would support One Oxfordshire as a better proposal for a rural Oxfordshire. The City Council has a lot of poverty generally and sees the Green Belt as an opportunity for more housing. The SODC proposal is a split idea and has no traction. No decisions have been announced on the Green Belt. The single unitary has

the whole county to look at for housing which is fairer to everyone. Another meeting has been arranged for next week. This will not be a decision for the PC to take.

- Parish Council logo competition – AWB’s logo was not accepted by the PC, and the Council holds the final decision. **Action:** *GS and JS to organise the logo competition.*
  - Silhouette soldier for VE/VJ Day for £175 from Royal British Legion Industries – *ordered and delivery due on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025.*
  - Baby and Toddler group grant – *PC to give the B&T group a grant of £100.* **Action:** Clerk for next meeting.
  - Email from OGBN with an opportunity to register an objection now to becoming part of Greater Oxford after 2028 – agreed to reply after LGR meeting. *The PC unanimously agreed to object to the Greater Oxford proposal.* **Action:** *PC to send an objection letter to the Minister of State for Housing.*
  - 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. **Action:** AWB to chase and find a date for a meeting.
  - Hole in the fence on the Rec – update from AWB – see item 124.
  - Asset Register – record title number for cemetery on asset register – update from JS – *ongoing.*
  - Land Registry form – to be completed by AWB and the Clerk.
  - Thames Water and Sewage Treatment Works – feedback from the drop-in session at the village hall on 16<sup>th</sup> September – it was a good session and included plans. Some residents had attended. Most of the hard work has been done now. The drop-in would have been more helpful three months ago. The two-storey portacabins are now single storey. The sewage cake is removed, and the treated water goes down Polecat Lane. The water is wildlife quality and not drinking water. The work has been quiet and there are lots of signs at Polecat Lane.
- 117. OCC and SODC MATTERS** – To receive reports from the County Councillor and District Councillor: *Cllr Bearder was not present at the meeting and had sent a written report after the meeting.*
- 118. PLANNING** – To consider all recent applications received and to report notifications and decisions from South Oxfordshire District Council – all previously circulated.

**P25/S2832/HH**

Eastwoods, Stanton Road, Forest Hill, Oxford, OX33 1DT  
Erection of an annexe for ancillary use to the main dwellinghouse.  
*The Parish Council has No Objections to the planning application.*

**P25/S2831/LDP**

Eastwoods, Stanton Road, Forest Hill, OX33 1DT

Use of the land to site a mobile home for ancillary use to the main dwellinghouse.

*The Parish Council has No Objections to the planning application.*

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

**a) Balances at bank:**

Current Account – Nat West	£5,066.15	at 31.08.25
Unity Current Account	£20,127.56	at 30.09.25
Unity Reserve Account – (2.25 %)	£33,734.78	at 30.09.25
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£58,928.49</b>	

<b>Less:</b> Unpresented cheques	£527.50
<b>Plus:</b> unpresented receipts	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£58,400.99</b>

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

Total available funds **£18,400.99**

CIL balance £27,278.17

Receipts included in above figure £10,365.24

**b) Payment requests – by Online Banking, DD, or Cheque**

Admin to the Parish Council – October	£1307.43
Unity Service Charge – September	£6.00
Tactical Facilities Management Ltd – Sep waste	£65.00
Tactical Facilities Management Ltd – Sep ground	£495.00
Tactical Facilities Management – Rec clearance	£96.00
The Play Inspection Company Ltd – Annual	£113.94
Lincoln College, Oxford – Village Hall rent	£250.00
RBLI – Unknown Tommy Statue x 1	£200.00

**c) Scribe Reports:** Bank Reconciliation as at 30.09.25

- Chair to approve and sign – resolved.

**d) To consider** the Summary of Receipts and Payments against Budget Report up to end September 2025 – fairly well on track and grass cutting is under budget now.

**e) Internal Financial Control check:**

- July to September – JS to complete. **Action:** Clerk to give the file to JS.

- f) **To consider** closing the Nat West Bank account and using the Switch service to transfer the funds to Unity Trust Bank – forms were signed and Clerk to return to Unity Bank.

**120. CLERK / RFO:** Nothing to report.

**121. SECTION 137 EXPENDITURE:** None

**122. VILLAGE and PARISH MATTERS:**

- Defibrillator – monthly check for Clerk to update The Circuit website – resolved.
- Garden Club funds of £1135 were transferred to the PC on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025. The balance will be added to earmarked reserves on the next agenda. The PC would like to thank the Garden Club for all their support over many years with the planters and keeping them looking nice. Any ideas for the use of the funds can be sent to the Clerk for the PC to consider.
- TFM - Photographs and mowing dates – photos of the Rec only were sent to the Clerk.
- TFM – dog bins have not been emptied as scheduled. AWB has been monitoring the bins, and they were not emptied on 24<sup>th</sup> September. PC agreed to pay the outstanding bills as we cannot prove otherwise that the work has not been done but may have been done later. Agreed to monitor the dog bins more closely. Clerk to check Shotover and AWB to check the village dog bins. PC to find another company going forward next year. The grass and dog bin scheduled dates have been stretched this year.
- Handyman – to define what it looks like and is it an employee or a self-employed person.
- SSE – tree cutting - St Nicholas Church Graveyard – No objections and Clerk to respond to SSE.

**123. VILLAGE HALL – To receive a report and updates**

**a. Managing Trustees report – October 2025**

Current account balance	£7487.95
Deposit account balance	<u>£2967.00</u>
Total Reserves	£10,454.95

Rentals are healthy based on word-of-mouth recommendation. Our costs for the basic services, water/electricity, continue to show savings on last year's figures when the electricity supplier was SSE.

b. **To consider** the VHC's proposals from the last meeting and decide: the committee is happy to apply for a grant for the lights. There are other reasons why the project should be done now. The wall heater in the kitchen should be done before the winter. Agreed to get the electrics and heater done now and then the redecorating can be done. The VHC asked the PC to pay £1,070.00 plus VAT. The VHC's balance of £10,454.95 will be used for redecorating and a buffer fund. Re-pointing would be a separate project. The Hall is in the SODC Conservation Area. Must use the same materials which is probably lime mortar and a test will need to be done. This will be a spring project. This was agreed by the PC to do the work and reclaim the VAT. Lettings are good with groups from the JR and more birthday parties for children. Parking is an issue and does limit bookings.

- 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 – VHC to look at the costs. They could then convert the coin meter to a card meter.

## 124. RECREATION GROUND:

- a) **Changing Facilities:** To review the original agreement in principle to relocate the green box to Stanton St John Cricket Club and make a firm decision regarding its future.

### **Discussion:**

The Chairman began by apologising if his previous comments had led councillors to believe that a decision had already been made; this was not his intention. He clarified that the matter was discussed three years ago and, upon reviewing the minutes, confirmed that it was only an agreement in principle, not a final decision.

At the last meeting, Councillor Shepherd raised concerns about the legal position regarding disposal of the facility. Following that, the Chairman and Clerk met with OALC on 1 October. OALC advised that disposal of assets does not fall under the Act, which applies only to high-value buildings and land. The Parish Council (PC) is within its rights to dispose of an asset if the council passes a motion to do so.

The Chairman reviewed the minutes and noted the following timeline:

**April 2022:** The subject of relocating the changing facilities was first

mentioned and deferred to July 2022 for inclusion on the agenda.

**July 2022:** Council Hobbins proposed re-locating the facility to Stanton St John cricket ground.

**10 November 2022:** The council agreed in principle to the proposal, based on the fact that the facility had not been used for at least five years and the original grant was intended to support sport. Conditions included:  
Net zero cost to the council.

Water and electricity supply must remain and be available for future use. It was agreed that Councillor Hobbins would obtain further information from the cricket club, and the project was considered for 2024. Since then, the item has remained “ongoing” on the agenda.

The Chairman expressed hope that the OALC advice and references to the minutes addressed concerns raised by a member of the public and comments on Facebook regarding disposal of the asset and lack of consultation.

### **Background:**

In 2013, the PC, with strong support from the Forest Hill Sports and Social Club (FHSSC) and the football club, obtained a £50,000 grant from Sport England for changing facilities. The aim was to support the football club and provide facilities for village events such as fetes.

The facilities were installed in 2015 after the necessary approvals were obtained and power and water were supplied. Unfortunately, the football club ceased operations after a few years, followed by FHSSC. The Sport England agreement was for seven years, which has now expired.

Since then, the facility has remained unused except for storage. To reduce costs, water and electricity have been disconnected. The facility remains in good condition. Sport England has confirmed they have no objection to its disposal.

### **Additional Considerations:**

The Chairman highlighted several points identified during the review:

### **Lease Restrictions:**

The current lease (Section C14) for the recreation ground does not allow the council to assign or sublet any part of the ground. It can only be used by the council. Activities must not cause a nuisance to neighbouring properties. The Chairman noted that during previous Sunday games, complaints were received about foul language, which must be considered for future use.

### **Planning Permission:**

Regular parking would require planning permission for change of use, and the entrance would need modification.

### **Business Rates:**

The facility is not currently subject to business rates, but any change in use would require this to be considered.

### **Financial Responsibility:**

The precept received from parishioners must be used for the benefit of the parish. Any spending decisions must prioritise the interests of those who fund it.

### **Next Steps:**

The council agreed that, as three years have passed since the original in-principle decision, it is appropriate to review the future of the changing facilities. If a use that benefits the parish can be identified, that will be the preferred option.

### **It was agreed to:**

Publish a notice in the **Four Parishes Newsletter** and on Facebook inviting ideas and suggestions, ideally with supporting plans.

Discuss responses at the February meeting.

Request Stanton St John Cricket Club to provide a final proposal within the same timeline.

### **Action:**

Chairman to draft an article for the next edition of the Four Parishes by **15 October 2025**.

Council Hobbins to obtain a proposal from Stanton St John Cricket Club for submission to the PC.

- b) Routine Monthly Playground Inspection and actions required. The equipment is getting old. AWB can do some of the repairs. A quote has been obtained for the rest of the repairs from RPM.
- c) Quote received for repairs to the play area following the annual inspection and recommendations.
  - a. Timber gate – replace with a fence panel.
  - b. Fencing – quote for £500 from Complete Fencing for three posts,

- picket slats, gate, top rails and kick panel including materials and labour – quote agreed.
- c. Spinning pole – worn bearing – monitor.
  - d. Swings
  - e. Junior Ship – quote £2,440 to repair.
  - f. Cradle seat - £60 to clean or £300 each to replace, if necessary.
  - g. Motorboat - £185 to repair.
  - h. Complian - £3,750 to replace the rubber mulch – not agreed.
  - i. Spinnaker - £185 to repair.
  - j. Hedges – AWB to cut.
  - k. Basket swing
  - l. Zip Wire - £650 for full inspection – agreed.
  - m. Timber unit - £320 quote.
  - n. Spire Net - £10 quote.
  - o. Total £4,495.00 plus VAT to do the work that needs doing now. The PC has spent little to no maintenance for several years but has repaired some of the equipment. The medium risk is the pirate boat, and the rest needs to be kept tidy and is low risk.
  - p. Hole in the fence onto the road – caused by a low animal track. AWB to cut back and block the holes so the children can still play in the hedge.

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

- Mowing and upkeep of the Cemetery – report from GS – the mowing is fine and TFM do a good job on open spaces.
- Burial plots in our parish cemetery – enquiry about reservations for Muslim graves and any further advice received – discussed. JS has spoken to a funeral director. The logistics have not been confirmed. The PC does not reserve plots now. This is not a problem as there are still plots available. The PC needs to confirm logistics and be satisfied and make sure that we can cover all the obligations.

**126. ALLOTMENTS:** to receive any updates and matters for consideration:

- JB has spoken to RS - the PC got permission from Lincoln College to put a pipe across the allotments. RS wanted to use the water. The Village Hall Committee pay charitable rates for water. RS was not in favour of the pipe going across the land. The VHC could look into the water situation. JB has spoken to RS about the fence. This will be a decision for the VHC and JB or RS to speak to them.
- Perimeter fence – next steps. If we move the fencing, we will have to change the lease with Lincoln College. The idea to move the fence was to make more available plots. PC to look at the lease. RS is the tenant of the land. **Action:** AWB asked JB to get an idea of the cost of the rabbit fencing.

127. **OALC / NALC** - all updates previously circulated.

128. **INFORMATION and CORRESPONDENCE** – all circulated when received:

- Lincoln College - The Village Hall, Main Street, Forest Hill
- Community First Oxfordshire AGM 2025 on 6<sup>th</sup> November
- Have your say on street cleansing in your town or parish.
- P22/S4618/O - Land North of Bayswater Brook - Draft S106 Legal Agreement available to view
- Please Sign Our Petition and Circulate - Reject The 'Greater Oxford' Unitary Authority
- TTRO (T16453) Temporary Road Closure, No Waiting and Layby Closure - Forest Hill, A40 East Bound Layby near Forest Hill - A temporary Notice is being made to implement the temporary closure and will operate from 18 November 2025 up to and including 19 November 2025. This will operate between 20:00 and 06:00.
- OPFA AGM - Monday 20th October 2025
- Get Involved in Stoptober – Resources & Funding Available for Parish and Town Councils
- TFM - Parish Services and Winter Inspections
- Report of constant anti-social behaviour on the roof of the green box. Cars parked on the road outside the Rec. The police do not do anything. Suggestions included CCTV and anti-climb stickers.

129. **Items for next Agenda:** all items for the next agenda to be submitted to the Clerk by 1<sup>st</sup> November 2025.

130. **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 13<sup>th</sup> November 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 9.00 pm.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....