

**FOREST HILL WITH SHOTOVER PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON**

Thursday 9th July 2026 at 7.00pm in Forest Hill Village Hall

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

In Attendance: S Cox, Clerk and RFO; County Cllr T Bearder (OCC)

Members of the Public: 5

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26/27 063	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – received from Cllr Hobbins (on holiday) and Cllr Waters (working on the farm). The Parish Council resolved to accept these apologies.
26/27 064	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Cllr Stutfield declared an interest as a member of the Village Hall Committee.
26/27 065	PUBLIC FORUM – Five members of the public attended and raised concerns about the hiring of the Village Hall to groups with no connection to the village for private events, in particular an 18th birthday party held on Thursday 2nd July 2026. Concerns raised included: vehicles parking on pavements and verges as far as, and beyond, Bank Cottages, obstructing residents' driveways and creating a hazard for pedestrians and pushchairs; the number and frequency of such bookings; loud PA systems and noise continuing late into the evening; and attendees loitering and trespassing onto neighbouring gardens. Residents said the doors of the hall had been left open during the event, with the gathering effectively spilling into the street, and that the keyholder had not remained on site for its duration. They said they had raised similar concerns with the Village Hall Committee on previous occasions without lasting improvement, and asked the Parish Council, as head leaseholder, to intervene. The Chairman explained that the Parish Council holds the head lease of the Village Hall, while the Village Hall Committee, as trustees of the charity, are responsible for day-to-day hiring within the terms of the deed of assignment, which requires the hall to be run primarily for the benefit of parish residents. Councillors agreed that hiring to groups whose events cause repeated nuisance to neighbouring residents is inconsistent with this purpose, and that a keyholder failing to remain for the duration of an event is unacceptable. RESOLVED: no further bookings of this type will be taken until the Parish Council has met with the Village Hall Committee to review the hiring rules, including booking terms and conditions, deposits, and possible restrictions on numbers and hired PA equipment. Cllr Stutfield confirmed, on behalf of the Village Hall Committee, that no further bookings of this type are currently scheduled.
26/27 066	MINUTES OF LAST MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL - held on Thursday 11th June 2026 – confirmed and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.
26/27 067	UPDATES ON PROGRESS FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Memorial bench and plaque – installed at the top of the Recreation Ground and complete. Bus pull-in – update from Cllr Molloy: the Parish Council can arrange installation itself via a contractor (approx. £1,000) rather than await Highways, which falls outside their remit and would take longer. Action: Cllr Molloy to obtain three written quotes for a decision at the next meeting; cost to be met from the Traffic Calming reserve (CIL). Forest Hill traffic bump or filter – update from Cllr Molloy: Highways confirmed the Parish Council could apply for a speed hump, speed cushion, or chicane at the west end

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	of the village, but any application requires evidence of a speeding problem. A recent speed survey did not show significant speeding, making an application unlikely to succeed at present. The more pressing issue remains a chicane at the village entrance to slow traffic on the way out of the village. Action: AWB to circulate the survey data to councillors. Gigaclear – no update; still awaiting a response from the landowner's agent regarding permission to lay fibre. Action: AWB to continue chasing.
26/27 068	BUS SERVICE and TRANSPORT: PTR Rep update from Cllr Stutfield – no update to report. The next PTR meeting will be held online on Tuesday 14th July 2026 at 1.30pm.
26/27 069	OCC and SODC MATTERS – Cllr Bearder reported: Local Government Reorganisation: boundary decisions are expected to be announced shortly, with Forest Hill with Shotover likely to fall within a new "Greater Oxford" unitary authority; a shadow authority is expected to be elected in May 2027, taking over fully in 2028. An injunction has been secured against individuals displaying unauthorised flags in the district, and most have now been removed. Enterprise Zone funding has been secured to seed-fund two new train stations planned for east Oxford, with costs recovered later via developer (S106) contributions. Cycle path works near the school remain at an early design stage; funding for construction has not yet been secured. The Parish Council's objection to the Shepherds Pit Lane closure proposal, resolved in June, will be considered by the County Council shortly. The Botley Road bridge is expected to reopen to traffic at the end of August, with Oxford's traffic filters coming into effect from mid-September; residents' parish permits will continue to be honoured, and exemptions will remain for vans, lorries, care workers, and disabled badge holders. In response to a query from the Chairman about Park & Ride fares being cheaper than the local bus, Cllr Bearder explained this reflects the county's limited control over privately-run bus routes and Park & Ride sites, though free travel has been introduced for healthcare workers and teachers, with free travel before 9am for disabled passengers under consideration. Asked what a Greater Oxford authority would mean for the parish, Cllr Bearder said it is likely to bring significant additional housing growth beyond what is already planned, delivered in part through a development corporation with reduced local planning control.
26/27 070	PLANNING: P26/S1301/HH – Red Hill Farm Cottage, Church Hill, Forest Hill – proposed rear/side single storey extension with first floor extension. No objection. P26/S1887/HH – Oak Apples, Old Road, Shotover Hill – proposed various domestic alterations and extensions. No objection. Planning decisions: none reported.
26/27 071	FINANCE: a) Balances at bank: Unity Current Account £13,121.64 at 30.06.26.

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	Unity Reserve Account £30,004.99 at 30.06.26. Earmarked reserves unchanged (General £10,000, Maintenance £5,000, Traffic Calming £20,000, Garden Club £1,120.01). Total available funds £7,006.62. CIL balance £21,580.62. Receipts included in the above: £145.17 credit interest and £244.00 allotment rents and cemetery fees. b) Payment requests approved unanimously: Admin to the Parish Council (July) £605.63. Unity Bank Service Charge (June) £7.00. Tactical Facilities Management Ltd, June dog bins £65.00. Starboard Systems Ltd, Invoice 5 subscription £21.60. Stanley & Pickford, Rectory Farm mowing (May) £480.00. Starboard Systems Ltd, Invoice 1 cemetery import £238.80. Earth Anchors Ltd, fixing kit, teak seat, and brass plaque £764.40. An additional invoice for internal audit work of £225.00 was also approved. c) Scribe Reports – Bank Reconciliation as at 30.06.26: deferred to next meeting. d) Summary of Receipts and Payments against Budget to end June 2026: deferred to next meeting. e) Internal Financial Control check, January–March and April–June: deferred to next meeting; Cllr Stutfield to complete on her return. f) Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26: The Annual Internal Audit Report was received and noted. Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement – was completed and signed by the Chairman and RFO. Section 2 – Accounting Statements – signed by the Chairman and RFO. g) The Period for Exercise of Public Rights will run from Monday 13th July to Friday 21st August 2026 (30 working days), by appointment with the Clerk. h) Unity Trust Bank FSCS annual review – Clerk to confirm the Council's eligibility by 27th September 2026.
26/27 072	CLERK / RFO: Internal Audit for 2025/26 – extension granted to 14th July 2026 to submit the AGAR. Annual review for the Clerk with the Chairman and a Councillor – date to be confirmed. PC meetings to continue monthly, to be reviewed at the end of the financial year.
26/27 073	SECTION 137 EXPENDITURE: None.
26/27 074	VILLAGE and PARISH MATTERS: Defibrillator checked by AWB and working correctly.

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	Grass cutting on the Rectory Farm contract – Council satisfied with standard and no outstanding complaints; a resident query about the Recreation Ground was attributed to variable growth caused by dry weather in April followed by rain in May, and a reply will be sent explaining this. Annual insurance renewal due 20th August 2026 – to proceed with no changes. Winter Preparedness – Council agreed no additional grit or salt supply is required, as Highways continues to grit Main Street reliably.
26/27 075	VILLAGE HALL – Managing Trustees report noted, total reserves £11,790.03. See item 065 regarding hiring and nuisance concerns. Repointing brickwork: RESOLVED – the Parish Council, as leaseholder responsible for the structure of the building, will meet the cost of the £200 damp survey of the rear wall. Wi-Fi (Gigaclear/BT Openreach): no progress; still awaiting a response from the landowner's agent – see item 067.
26/27 076	RECREATION GROUND: a) Summer Fete on the Rec, 29th August 2026: the completed hire form, risk assessment and insurance cover certificate are still to be provided by Cllr Molloy to the Clerk; insurance cannot be arranged until closer to the event date. Parking will be restricted to the designated area on the Recreation Ground, clearly signposted, to avoid vehicles overspilling onto Stanton Road and obstructing access in and out of the village; Cllr Molloy to review the site parking plan and stewarding arrangements. Electricity at the cabin: there is currently no power reaching the meter; Cllr Molloy to arrange a new supply contract, as the existing account cannot be transferred without contacting former named account holders. RESOLVED: the Parish Council approved spending £250 to have the water supply tested ahead of the fete (valid for five years), to be completed in good time before the event. b) Routine Monthly Playground Inspection: no issues found. A redundant, broken fence post from a former double-gate arrangement is to be removed, and a safe walkway is to be marked out to separate pedestrians from vehicle access during the fete.
26/27 077	CEMETERY: Mowing and upkeep – now completed to a good standard, following earlier delays caused by a dry April and subsequent rapid growth in May; a reply will be sent to the resident who raised a complaint, explaining the seasonal factors. The Parish Council recorded its thanks to Mr M Scully for voluntarily cutting back a number of graves that had not been maintained for several months. Scribe Cemetery Management Software – transfer of files complete; grave numbering to be corrected before going live on the website. First Registration of Forest Hill Cemetery and App – Cllr Stutfield holds the original paperwork and will arrange for it to be given to the Clerk to send to the solicitors. Ashes area improvements and grave maintenance – the area has been cut back, and memorial plaques are now visible; to be kept maintained. Item to be removed from next agenda. War Memorial cleaning – a quote of approximately £2,500–£3,000 was received. RESOLVED: not to proceed at this cost; cutting back the surrounding box hedging to improve airflow was agreed as a more proportionate first step. It was noted the box hedge along the old cemetery wall has died, believed to be box moth, and will continue to be monitored. Item to be removed from next agenda.

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	The old cemetery area maintained by SODC has been cut as part of their annual maintenance programme. Item to be removed from next agenda.
26/27 078	ALLOTMENTS: Perimeter fence – fencing materials remain at the Clerk's home awaiting collection; Cllr Shepherd has followed this up. Allotment Holders list for 2026/27 – Cllr Shepherd to provide an updated list to the Clerk, required for the annual audit and to set up allotment holders on the Scribe system for invoicing.
26/27 079	OALC / NALC – all updates previously circulated, noted.
26/27 080	INFORMATION and CORRESPONDENCE: Email from resident, Forest Hill Village Hall inappropriate hiring and usage – considered under items 065 and 075. Problems with rubbish at Shotover – noted; responsibility for the affected land lies with South Oxfordshire District Council, not Oxford City. The Clerk has responded to the resident and signposted the Shotover Preservation Society. Email from resident, parking issue at the Village Hall – considered under item 065. General review of speed limits on Oxfordshire's rural A and B class road network – stakeholder consultation noted. Outreach at Clean Slate, supporting trauma-informed community work – RESOLVED: the Parish Council will not be making a donation this year, as the organisation's work is based in Bicester, outside the parish. Email from resident with complaints about Forest Hill Recreation Ground, roads and grass cutting – considered under item 074; a reply, drafted by the Chairman, will be sent by the Clerk.
26/27 081	Items for next agenda: all items for the next agenda to be submitted to the Clerk by 27th July 2026.
26/27 082	DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 13th August 2026 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall, Forest Hill.

Meeting closed at: 20:30.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Chairman: _____

Date: _____