

COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Cookham Parish Council
Held in the Community Room of the Library on Tuesday 4th February 2025

PRESENT: Cllrs. B. Perry (Chairman), L. Austin, C. Aisladie, M. Brar, H. Pleming, E Bune, T. Caen, J. Edwards and N. Bedwell

Also Present: Mrs. Deepa Kanthi (Clerk) and Mrs Christine Hunter
 No Members of public or press present

OPEN FORUM:

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllrs. M. Howard, R. Kellaway, M-L. Kellaway, A-L. Regan, J. Moore and L. Tull.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman declared an interest in the Cookham Society and item 7.2.
 Cllr. Brar declared an interest in the planning items below.

3. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 7th January 2025

These were **approved**.

4. To ratify the decision made and recorded in item 17 of the above minutes (AOB) relating to seeking expert advice on the software tool used by RBWM in respect of AL37/Cannondown Road site and the further steps necessary to seek a Judicial Review

This was **approved**.

5. To receive, for information, minutes of committee meetings prepared since the last Council meeting

5.1 Planning Committee meeting on 14th January 2025- **Noted**.

6. Matters arising from the last meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda

None.

7. Finance

7.1 To approve payments/receipts to date as per the cashbook circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting- **Approved**.

7.2 To ratify payment of £750+VAT to Mr Richard Moules KC in respect of advice given in connection with whether planning decisions by a Local Planning authority are governed by the National Planning Policy Framework in force at the time of the decision or of the application. **Approved**.

7.3 To approve expenditure of £735 from General Reserves in respect of the regeneration of 11 allotment plots, given the exhaustion of General Purposes funds. **Approved**.

8. To approve a budget for installing the defibrillator

The Clerk reported that a quotation of £535.00 was obtained to install the defibrillator. This was deemed excessively high, and the office is currently in the process of seeking additional quotations for comparison purposes. It was agreed it should be installed in the porch area of the Library building. It was also agreed that training should be provided to the office staff and the councillors to use the defibrillator. This item was deferred until next meeting

Action: -Clerk.

9. To appoint Cllr. Perry in place of Cllr. Howard to represent Cookham Parish Council at the Local Access Forum

This was agreed.

10. To receive any update on the planning application by Elegy Ltd to build a crematorium on Long Lane.

Cllr. Edwards reported that the Chairman had prepared a detailed objection which had been submitted. She further clarified that the deadline for submitting objections has now been extended till mid-February. Consequently, the RBWM website now displays 40 objections, which represents a significant improvement in the number of submissions. Cllr. Edwards recommended that the Council should seek professional advice from Troy, and if they so advise a supplementary objection, particularly but not exclusively with regard to the updated NPPF. This was **agreed**. There was also a discussion regarding the potential integration of the unused football ground into future development plans for the area.

11. To agree a budget for advice from Troy in relation to the Crematorium application.

Cllr. Edwards reported that she has received a quotation of £1500.00 +VAT. The estimate provided by Troy indicated that the work would require two hours, billed at a rate of £750.00+VAT per hour. It was **agreed unanimously** to seek this advice, monies to be taken from planning budget reserves.

Action: - Cllr. Edwards

12. To approve requesting that the Church Commissioners donate or sell to the Parish Council up to 1 hectare of land at the Cemetery Field to extend the Cemetery

Following debate, it was **agreed** that the Chairman should approach the Church Commissioners to request the donation or sale to the Parish Council of as much land as possible from the Cemetery Field to extend the Cemetery.

Action: - Chairman

13. To consider and approve changes to the rules relating to the cemetery to allow reservation of plots

Prior to the meeting, revised rules and regulations regarding the Cemetery were circulated. Concerns were raised about the availability of space and the need to limit the number of plots available to individuals. This matter was deferred to the next meeting.

It was also suggested the charges for the burials should be revisited.

Action: - Clerk

14. To receive an update from the Clerk concerning the letting agents for Cemetery Lodge

The Clerk explained that two quotations have been obtained: one from Andrew Milson via email and another one from Baker Stone verbally. Both quotations indicate similar fees, at around 12%, comparable to fees charged by Prospect. The Clerk also noted that there would be upfront costs if the estate agents were changed. After discussion it was agreed to continue with Prospect. However, it was also **agreed** to request that either the Clerk or a Councillor accompany Prospect during their six-monthly visits.

Action: - Clerk

15. To consider the risks posed, if any, by the presence of and situation of the picnic bench in the Alfred Major Recreation Ground play area and agree any action considered necessary

After a discussion, it was **agreed** to remove the bench in the play area and to upgrade the bench. The decision was made to install a new recycled plastic bench in its place. Authority to make the decision was delegated to Cllr. Fleming and the Clerk in accordance with the finance regulations. The funds for this project will be drawn from the General

Reserves. It was also suggested the existing bench should be offered to the Community Allotment Association at AMRG and potentially installed in the allotment area or, if they did not want it, in the Orchard area of the Sutton Road allotments.

Action: - Clerk and Cllr. Fleming

16. To approve the costs of work to trees T11, 12 and 13 in the Alfred Major Recreation Ground

The Clerk explained that some emergency work had to be carried out on the trees, necessitating the acquisition of a new quotation for the completion of the entire required work. The new quote in the sum of £660.00 for the completion of the outstanding works was **agreed** funds to be allocated from the General Reserves.

Action - Clerk

17. To receive any update on proposed development schemes for the land at Cannondown Road (BLP site AL37, pl/aps 23/02022/OUT and 23/02019/OUT), including in respect of any statutory or judiciary review, and to consider and approve any further steps.

The Chairman circulated the report prior to the meeting, which was noted.

18. To consider Council's response to the South East Draft Transport Strategy Consultation

It was **agreed** to delegate to Cllr. Edwards the task of preparing the response, which is to be presented at the next Council meeting. Additionally, the consultation for the National Transport Strategy was discussed. It was noted that the response to this consultation must be submitted before 20th February. It was **agreed** to delegate to Cllr. Edwards the responsibility of preparing and submitting the response on behalf of the Council.

Action: - Cllr. Edwards

19. To receive an update from the Chairman relating to the proposal to install a new path to the side gate of the Heritage Centre with a view to approval under the Byelaws.

The Chairman explained that in the previous meeting, it was agreed to ask that the path should be 1 metre wide instead of 2 metres and should be constructed using ecofriendly materials. He had discussed both these requests with Odney Estates who agreed to reduce the width of the path to 1.25 metres wide (the minimum to accommodate wheelchair access) and would be tarmacked to match the existing and to blend with the surrounding environment.

20. To receive an update on the Cookham Rise School Lease

Cookham Rise School draft renewal lease of part of AMRG has been approved and is now with the school.

21. To receive and approve a report from the Chairman regarding the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chairman had circulated a report prior to the meeting. He had no updates. The report and its recommendations were **agreed**.

22. To approve the Meeting Schedule for 2025-2026.

The Clerk had circulated the draft schedule prior to the meeting. The schedule was **agreed** subject to moving the April 2025 Planning meeting to 8 April. Cllr. Aisladie pointed out there was only one staffing meeting scheduled this year but if need arises more meetings will be called as required.

Action: - Clerk

23. To consider whether to hold and if so arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting scheduled for 25th March 2025.

Due to time constraints, it was decided there will be no Annual Parish Meeting this year. It was discussed and agreed this should be on Council meeting agenda in November 2025 which would allow enough time to prepare for the meeting. **Action: - Clerk**

24. To discuss the proposal received in respect of Wing Day 2025

There was extensive discussion regarding this matter. Several concerns were raised about permitting the event. Cllr. Bedwell circulated a comprehensive email detailing the issues that had arisen following last years event. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to Nick Billingham to understand the arrangements for Wing Day 2025. Cllr. Brar volunteered to speak to the licencing manager at RBWM regarding the licensing needed for the event. Also, Cllr. Aisladie volunteered to speak to James Coppas to gather their thoughts and support for the event. **Action: - Chairman, Cllr. Brar and Cllr. Aisladie**

25. To update on discussions with the Borough Council regarding potential devolution of powers.

The Chairman reported that the discussions have commenced with RBWM regarding the potential takeover of verge cutting, frass maintenance and general maintenance. It was noted that Cookham and Bisham are the only two councils that have expressed their interests I the matter. RBWM has provided the maps and specifications of the current work being carried out. The next steps involve obtaining further information from the local contractors to determine their charges for the services. Once this information has been gathered, the Parish Council will continue negotiations with RBWM. **Action: - Clerk**

26. Outside Bodies and Borough Councillor reports.

Cllr. Brar reported Cllr Howard had sent a report. The Clerk to circulate the report to the Councillors.

27. Any other business (by permission of the Chairman and upon which no decisions may be

None

The meeting closed at 09.50 pm

Next meeting Tuesday 4th March 2025 at 7.30pm in the Community Room at Cookham Library.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

.....Chairman

Dated.....