

COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Cookham Parish Council
Held in the Community Room of the Library on Tuesday 1st April 2025

PRESENT: Cllrs. B. Perry (Chairman), C. Aisladie, L. Austin, M. Brar, T. Caen, J. Edwards, M. Howard, M-L. Kellaway, R. Kellaway, J Moore, H. Pleming, A-L. Regan

Also Present: Mrs. Deepa Kanthi (Clerk)

OPEN FORUM: None.

The meeting observed a one-minute silence to honour the death of Cllr. Bune on 31st March as a mark of respect for her and for her dedicated service.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllrs. Aisladie, Bedwell and Tull

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 4th March 2025

These were **approved unanimously** except for a correction required to amend the next meeting date to 1st April 2025 and the rectification of a spelling error to Mr. Billingham's name. Cllr. Pleming asked it to be noted that she had voted against dogs being required to be on leads on item 16.

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

Planning Committee meeting on 11th March 2025. **Approved**

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

The Chairman reported that according to the minutes of the Marsh Meadow committee meeting the Wing Day event is now going ahead on Marsh Meadow.

The Chairman noted that the Clerk was recording the meeting, as she had the last one. He proposed that this should be normal practice, and noted on the agenda in future, the recording to be solely for the Clerk's use in writing the minutes and to be destroyed immediately the minutes were approved. This was **agreed**.

6. To approve, in accordance with s.85(1) Local Government Act 1972, illness as a reason for the absence of Cllr Eileen Bune for an indefinite period.

The Chairman and Councillors expressed deep sorrow at the death of Cllr. Bune, which occurred unexpectedly after despatch of the agenda, appreciating her service since 2015. It was agreed to send an appropriate tribute, subject to the family's wishes. It was also agreed to offer the normal rebate for sitting Councillors of 50% of the Cemetery fees if Cllr. Bune's family wished to use it. Cllr. Brar would liaise with Cllr. Bune's family. Plans (subject to family approval) for a tribute on the Council's website and communication with the local newspaper were also noted.

Action: Cllr. Brar, Clerk

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 ensure proper notice of actual approval and adoption is given to the award of these contracts- **Approved**

7.3 To consider and/or approve the awarding of contracts for Grounds Maintenance 2025-28.-

The Chairman reported that the tenders received had significantly exceeded the approved budget. A meeting was therefore held by the former locum Clerk, the Chairmen of Finance and General Purposes Committees and himself to address the issue. It was resolved to exclude Stonehouse Common from Holdford's contract due to the elevated costs. Additionally, Holdford was requested to reduce their contract price by 5%. Holdford had agreed both requests. Revised contracts had now been signed by Steve Taylor and Holdford accordingly. This left a small sum within the remaining budget which would be used for the ad hoc maintenance of Stonehouse Common. The revised contracts and this arrangement were **approved unanimously**.

7.4 To ratify the increased cost of installing the picnic bench at £160.00 -

The Clerk explained that an initial quote of £90 was approved for the installation of the bench. However, upon delivery the installation required significantly more work as it arrived flat pack instead of pre-assembled. The Clerk had to approve a cost of £160.00 instead of £90 for installation. This was **agreed** by the Council.

8. Formally to agree the revised version of the Rules relating to the use of AMRG.

The Chairman reported a document was circulated prior to the meeting with the revised version of the rules relating to AMRG. The new rules were formally **agreed** by the Council.

9. To agree next steps to produce an Annual report for 2024-25.

The Clerk requested the Chairmen of each Committee submit their annual report for this year by 4th April 2025. This was **agreed**.

10. To ratify the response made by the Council's Emergency Working Party in relation to the Berkshire Nature Recovery Consultation

Cllr. Edwards reported the consultation on the plan initiated by the Berkshire authorities, led by RBWM, in response to the government's request to rewild 30% of the country. She referred in particular to its implications for Green Belt preservation and wildlife corridors. Due to the timing of the consultation the Chairman had convened the EWP. It had asked her to respond on behalf of the Council focussing on the factors she had mentioned. She had done so. This was fully **supported** by the Council and the Council expressed appreciation for Cllr. Edwards' efforts.

11. To consider a response on the consultation issued by RBWM relating to 'Public Rights of Way Milestones Statement 2025-26'

Report from RBWM was circulated prior to the meeting. No further updates.

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

The Chairman reported that no new information had been received. The next RBWM Planning Committee meeting at which this might be considered were 24th April and 15th May. It was resolved to keep this item on the agenda for the next meeting.

13. To receive an oral update on the Cookham Rise School Lease.

The Chairman reported that a document had been circulated outlining the school's proposal to construct a non-permanent sandpit on the leased land. It was also noted that

legal advice confirmed the proposal's compliance with the terms of the lease. It was **agreed unanimously** to proceed with the lease.

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

The Chairman's report on the NP had been circulated. RBWM had reaffirmed previous comments raising concerns regarding practical application of equine and agricultural policies and the Church Commissioners had submitted comments apparently aimed at assisting the development of their land, which they said they would seek as part of the next BLP, which is now expected in about 2028 according to the indicative timetable from RBWM which he had also circulated.

The Chairman added that the Examiner had on 31st March submitted a Clarification Letter raised sensible queries. He recommended engaging Troy promptly (which was supported by the Working Party) to prepare a response. He also asked for an approval of the budget in the sum of £1,750 to come out of the Working party allocated budget. The Chairmans's written report and other proposals were **unanimously agreed**.

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

No updates were received.

16. To hear a report on the application to buy more land from the Church Commissioners for the cemetery and to consider their proposals to build on the Cemetery Field.

The Chairman reported that the request had been sent. No response had yet been received.

17. Outside Bodies and Borough Councillor reports.

Cllr. Brar had circulated a document with the reports prior to the meeting. Cllr. Aisladie referred to the Marsh Meadow Management Committee.

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

None

The meeting closed at 08.55 pm

Next meeting Tuesday 6th May 2025 at 7.30pm in the Community Room at Cookham Library.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

.....Chairman

Dated.....