

COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Cookham Parish Council
Held in the Community Room of the Library on Tuesday 3rd June 2025

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

Also Present: Mrs. Deepa Kanthi (Clerk).
 Five members of public.
 No members of the Press were present.

Open Forum

Mr. Paul Strzelecki raised three matters for discussion. First, he asked if that the Parish Council should support his opposition to the Odney, Rock the Moor event. He stated that, regardless of the Council's position, he would personally pursue the matter. Secondly, he highlighted the ongoing Licensing Policy Consultation being held by RBWM ending on 17th June. He felt that the Parish Council should respond to this. Lastly, he addressed an inaccuracy on the RBWM website regarding the Crematorium application, which incorrectly stated that the allocated period for public response was 14 days: actually, it was 13 days. He expressed appreciation to the Council for obtaining an extension.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Cllrs. M-L. Kellaway, Fleming and Tull.

2. Declarations of Interest.

None.

3. To approve minutes from Council Meeting on 6th May 2025.

The Chairman addressed two discrepancies in the minutes from the April meeting which he said need to be addressed as they were approved under item 5 of the May meeting. Firstly, he noted that the April minutes erroneously indicated that Cllr. Aisladie was both present and absent, which was factually inconsistent. Cllr. Aisladie confirmed that she had not attended the Council's April meeting. Secondly, the Chairman referenced a request made by Cllr. Fleming during the meeting on 6th May to amend her vote from 1st April 2025. He stated that he would discuss this matter directly with Cllr. Fleming. Having noted the first point, and subject to the resolution of the second, the minutes from the May meeting were approved.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS – To note the minutes of the following meetings:

- i. **Planning Committee – 13th May 2025.** They were **noted**.
- ii. **Finance Committee – 27th May 2025.** They were **noted**.

5. FINANCE:

- i. **To approve payments/receipts in May 2025.** These were **approved**.
- ii. **To ratify paying the fees of Troy Planning to prepare response to the examiner for NP.** The Chairman explained that the Council has still not been invoiced, and this will be ratified once we have the invoice from Troy planning.

6. To approve the Accounts, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the Annual Internal Auditor Report in accordance with the recommendation of Finance Committee.

Cllr. R. Kellaway reported following the finance meeting on 27th May, that the Council's

accounts for 2024-25 demonstrated reasonable compliance with the approved budget, despite significant spend on the locum Clerk and legal fees. He affirmed that the accounts were satisfactory.

The Chairman advised the Council that the internal auditor had identified only two very minor matters for attention: first, a £25 discrepancy in the record-keeping for Burials and Allotments, and secondly, the internal auditor's feeling (which the internal auditor admitted is contrary to practice guide) that the Council's General Funds were a little high.

All approved unanimously.

- 7. To approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Annual Section 1 in accordance with the recommendation of Finance Committee.**

Approved Unanimously.

- 8. To approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Annual Section 2 in accordance with the recommendation of Finance Committee.**

Approved Unanimously.

- 9. To note and approve the period for the exercise of public rights as running from Tuesday 10th June to Monday 21st July 2025.**

Approved Unanimously.

- 10. To review the Strategic Reserve Funds at 31st March 2025 and consider any redirection of such funds as recommended by the Finance Committee.**

The Clerk had circulated the proposed transfer of funds from General Funds to Strategic Reserves, as agreed in the finance meeting on 27th May. Cllr. R. Kellaway provided an explanation of these financial movements to the Council. The Chairman proposed an amendment to the Legal and Planning Consultant fees Strategic Reserves, recommending an increase in the allocation for legal fees from £2,600.00 to £4,600.00. This proposal was approved by a vote of 7 to 1. With that amendment all the reallocations of monies including the Legal and Planning Consultant fees, to the Strategic Reserves from General Funds were **unanimously agreed.**

- 11. To renew the membership of ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) for £105.00.**

Approved Unanimously.

- 12. To consider co-opting a Councillor to fill the casual vacancy and if so decided, to resolve to seek volunteers accordingly.**

Approved unanimously.

- 13. To reconsider AMRG rules agreed on 1 April and to decide on relevant ancillary actions regarding its management and that of Stonehouse Common.**

The Chairman initiated the debate by confirming that the notes from the consultation meeting regarding AMRG, held on 13th May 2025, had been published on the Council website.

Cllr. Moore arrived at 7:50 PM.

The Chairman was pleased that the general purpose of the rules had been understood during the consultation and emphasised that the Council's role was to reconcile concerns and establish appropriate regulations so that AMRG could be used safely and harmoniously by everyone. He highlighted that the issues discussed extended beyond the matter of dogs on and off leads to include motorised cycling, the use of BB guns that

discharge ball bearings, loitering groups, sexual activities, littering, and noise disturbances etc.

Cllr. Moore left at 8:40 PM.

Cllr. Howard reported that the Council had convened a meeting with representatives from Thames Valley Police, the local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), and RBWM warden. They advised and Cllr. Howard emphasised members of the public and the Council should report all incidents to either 999 or 101, depending on the nature of the event. Such reporting would be recorded and should lead to increased enforcement from the authorities.

Following an extensive debate, the Chairman summarised the Parish Council's resolutions as follows:

- Align the rules regarding dogs with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Public Spaces Protection Order (RBWM PSPO), reviewing this again if it did not succeed in resolving the issues. If it were necessary to restore the rule insisting the dogs be on leads an exception should be made for assistance dogs.
- Align the rules regarding barbecue use with RBWM policies.
- Revise the signage to ensure clear, detailed information at each entrance on robust signs.
- Incorporate a welcome note within the signage.
- Indicate on the signage that the area is monitored by CCTV.
- Engage with security providers to enhance CCTV coverage.
- Maintain a record of litter-picking activities which would include dog fouling.
- Prohibit the use of motorised vehicles (including motorcycles and motorised scooters) while permitting pedal cycles.
- Ban the use of drugs, sexual activity, littering, and foul language.
- Limit the number of dogs per dog walker to a maximum of four.
- Assess the feasibility of acquiring larger, colour-coded waste bins.
- Strengthen liaison efforts with RBWM, the PCSO and our own officers.

It was discussed whether AMRG should be closed at dusk. It was pointed out that there were three public footpaths across the park: these could not be closed and so would have to be fenced off, which was impractical.

It was agreed that signage should incorporate historical information about AMRG.

Cllr. Edwards requested the Clerk to email allotment holders at AMRG, advising them to report all incidents to both the police and RBWM.

The Chairman noted that the budget for 2025 had already been finalised, meaning that some of the proposed initiatives might not be implemented within the current fiscal year. Members discussed and agreed in principle the possibility of seeking sponsorship from local businesses and institutions, including the existing waste collection service, to fund new signage.

It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk would develop a comprehensive plan, to be presented at the July meeting for approval.

It was also resolved to adopt the same Rules for Stonehouse Common.

Action: Chairman and Clerk

14. To consider/investigate better security at the allotment at AMRG.

The Chairman said that this matter had been broadly covered in item 13. He further noted that the Clerk had circulated an email from Active Security, which outlined potential changes that could be made to existing security. Their proposed solutions might not be appropriate and as discussed in item 13 other potential solutions will be explored.

Cllr. Edwards stated that she would raise the issue of fencing with the allotment holders at their next meeting in October and seek their input on potential security measures.

Action: Chairman, Clerk and Cllr. Edwards

15. To consider and appoint Councillors to attend RBWM Rural Forum Site Visit hosted by Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA) on the 25th June 2025.

The Chairman reported he could not attend this meeting and requested volunteers to attend in his place. Cllr. Bedwell volunteered to attend the meeting.

Action: Cllr. Bedwell

16. To receive any update on the planning application by Elegy Ltd to build a crematorium on Long Lane and to decide any appropriate further action.

Cllr. Edwards provided an update on the crematorium application on Long Lane. The applicant has presented a new argument, based on new Government Guidance, that only the green belt between towns is protected so that Cookham, as a village has significantly less protection. This significantly impacts the evaluation of the proposal.

Part 1: Cllr. Edward had obtained a quotation from Troy Planning for another robust objection to the application. Troy Planning quoted a fee of £2,150 for drafting such a response. She and the Chairman would liaise with Troy to finalise the draft objection. Cllr. Edward initiated a formal motion to proceed with this, which was seconded by Cllr. Howard and **agreed** unanimously.

Part 2: Cllr Edwards noted the need to seek expert advice on the advantages and disadvantages of the Council deciding that the Parish should have the status of a town under s.245 Local Government Act 1972. While no formal quotation had been obtained from Troy Planning, she estimated the cost for this assessment to be approximately £3,000. The Chairman also reported that a barrister had quoted a fee of £2,000 for legal advice on this. He added that the Cookham Society would share half of the costs for this. Cllr. Edward invited Councillors to express their views on this. Cllr Howard and others felt this could be a very emotional issue. The Clerk advised that, given the sensitivity of the issue, the public should be consulted.

Following an extended debate, it was **agreed** that due to time constraints before RBWM's likely decision on the application, Part 2 would not be pursued further at present unless it appeared from the other advice that this might be a necessary game-changer.

Action: Cllr. Edwards

17. To receive a report from the Chairman regarding the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chairman's report had been circulated with the Agenda. The Chairman updated it orally: (a) no 'minor non material amendments' we had proposed had been accepted by RBWM except two to the Foreword and one to the Acknowledgements; (b) on that basis,

Jon had reissued the final version as amended; (c) RBWM had found seven very minor issues with that, which Jon had corrected; (d) RBWM do anticipate issuing their Decision Statement by Friday 6th June and Information Statement by Monday 9th June; (e) if they do so, the referendum is to be expected on 17th July. In answer to questions he confirmed that the cost of the referendum will be borne entirely by RBWM, who will be reimbursed by HMG and that the referendum will be an ordinary ballot at the usual polling stations in the Parish with the usual facilities for postal and proxy voting. The Chairman's report and proposals were unanimously agreed and on his proposal, it was also **agreed** to spend £100 or so on stickers for the Council's banners to advertise the referendum.

18. To receive an oral report on the car parking situation at the Medical Centre.

The Chairman reported that he had engaged in discussion with the Medical Centre practice secretary regarding the installation and locking of the gate. He reported that the response from the secretary was notably reserved, indicating that their decision to install a gate was likely to proceed despite the representations because the practice felt there was no acceptable alternative choice.

19. To receive an oral report on the position relating to Stonehouse Common.

The Chairman reported that the Land Registry has informed our solicitors that it will proceed today or tomorrow to register the Council's title to Stonehouse Common covering the area which is common land but that it could not do so in respect of the strip leading to that since this appears to be public highway. There might be technical issues about ownership of the subsoil there but in practice that was the outcome. The current position on that land seemed likely to continue.

20. To consider a list of projects.

Due to time constraints this item was deferred to next meeting in July.

21. Outside Bodies and Borough Councillor's reports.

Cllr. Howard gave an oral report upon a meeting which the Chairman, Cllr. Brar and he had attended in the Parish Office with Thames Valley Police (including Lorraine Holmes, 'our' local PCSO) and an RBWM warden on 30 May. The meeting was primarily related to AMRG. He stated that several key points were discussed. These included:

1. The alignment of AMRC rules with the RBWM Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) to ensure consistency and compliance.
2. The necessity of replacing and updating existing signage to reflect current regulations and enhance public awareness.
3. The importance of encouraging residents to report every incident to TVP and obtain a separate crime reference number via emergency services (999), the non-emergency number (101), or the TVP website.
4. The requirement for Cookham Parish Council (CPC) to investigate appropriate enforcement personnel to ensure effective oversight.
5. The establishment of an official reporting log by CPC for documentation and procedural transparency.

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

The Chairman referred to Mr. Strzelecki's comments on the planned 'Rock the Manor' event in August at the Odney Club. After discussion it was **agreed** that the Council would make no comment to the Licensing authority about this event, but that Cllr. Bedwell would respond to the RBWM consultation on licensing on behalf of the Council.

Action: Cllr. Bedwell

Cllr. Regan reminded the Council that the Scout Fair is scheduled to proceed on 21st June. She requested volunteers to assist with the event. In response, the Chairman, Cllr. Brar, and other members of the Council volunteered their support.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm

Next meeting Tuesday 1st July 2025 at 7.30pm in the Community Room at Cookham Library.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Chairman

Dated.....