COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Cookham Parish Council
Held in the Community Room of the Library on Tuesday 5th August 2025

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

Also Present: Mrs. Deepa Kanthi (Clerk) and one member of the press.

<u>Open Forum</u>

Cllr. Brar reported that on Monday, between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., a police van and an ambulance were observed at the AMRG. She said that a male individual was seen being arrested and seated in the police van.

1. **Apologies for Absence.**
   Cllrs. T Caen, M. Howard, H Pleming and L Tull.

2. **Declarations of Interest.**
   Cllr. Brar declared interest in item 11. The Chairman declared a financial interest in item 5(v).

3. **To approve minutes from the Council Meeting on 1st July 2025.**
   These were **approved.**

4. **COMMITTEE REPORTS – To note the minutes of the following meetings:**
   i. **Planning Committee – 8th July 2025. –** These were **noted.**

5. **FINANCE:**
   i. **To approve payments/receipts in July 2025. –** These were **approved.**
   ii. **To ratify paying the fees of Troy Planning to prepare a response to the examiner for the Neighbourhood Plan.-** This was **approved**
   iii. **To ratify the movement of funds to note-that £1284.00 of the payment to Troy planning agreed at the July meeting should come from strategic reserves. -** This was **approved**
   iv. **To ratify the payment of £100 to remove a wasps' nest at the Cemetery.** This was **approved**
   v. **To approve paying the remainder of the fee note to Landmark Chambers for the advice received.**
   The Chairman reported that the fee note received from Landmark Chambers raised two issues for the Council's audit procedures. First, the invoice was (quite correctly in legal procedural terms) addressed to the Bill Perry Law firm rather than to Cookham Parish Council; secondly, the invoice naturally reflected the full amount due, notwithstanding the prior agreement from the Cookham Society that it would contribute half of the total charges. The Chairman said that Bill Perry Law would ask Landmark Chambers to address a new bill for the Council's half of the fee direct to the Council (the Cookham Society having already paid their half). He confirmed that, subject to this being done, the invoice should be settled. This was **approved.**
   vi. The Chairman reported that the membership fees for the BALC and the NALC had increased in line with inflation. While the Council had **approved** payment of £1,298.15 at the May meeting, the actual amount due was £1,368.31. It was **agreed** that payment of the revised fee would be made if deemed appropriate

following consideration of the advantages of continued membership by the Chairman, the Clerk, Cllrs. R. Kellaway and Aisladie.

Action: Chairman, Clerk and Cllrs R Kellaway and Aisladie

6. **To inform the Council about the vacancy in the office of Councillor upon the resignation of Cllr. Moore and consider deciding to co-opt to fill the vacancy.**
The Chairman advised that Cllr. Moore had formally resigned, which was duly acknowledged and accepted by the Chairman. In accordance with statutory requirements, the office notified RBWM of the vacancy and issued the required public notices. The deadline for triggering a by-election was confirmed as 7th August, after which, should no election be called, the Council will be entitled to fill the vacancy by means of co-option. The Chairman further reported that two applications had been received to fill the vacancy arising from the passing of the late Cllr. Bune. It was **resolved** that (a) a notice seeing volunteers for co-option should be issued if no by-election were called; (b) interviews for the first vacancy would be conducted in September, as determined at the July meeting; and (c) the interview process for the second vacancy would follow in October if no by-election was called. **Action: Clerk**

7. **To review Wing day 2025 and associated matters and to consider attitude to any proposed such/similar event in 2026**.
The Chairman reported communication was sent to the organisers in accordance with the agreed discussion in Council meeting resulting in on-line discussion. The last email in the chain was his to one of the organisers, making various enquiries, which had never even been acknowledged. Cllr. Regan reported her understanding that when he had heard about the latest plans for the event, Mr James Copas had withdrawn agreement for use of Marsh Meadow for anything but parking. The event had proceeded solely on the premises of The Crown. The Chairman reported that even then loudspeakers could be heard at Widbrook Common. The Chairman said he had been interviewed by the Maidenhead Advertiser and had explained the Council's position of approval in principle but subject to being satisfied on certain matters and how matters had evolved. No article had yet appeared. Apparently, there were rumours that the Parish Council had said 'no' to the event; that was not so. It was **agreed** that Cllr. Regan would prepare a response, to be publicised on social media, Council Facebook, website and notice boards.
Action: Cllr. Regan
It was **agreed** that the Council should:
    1. Formulate an application form to use the Moor, which should be submitted adequately in advance; the Chairman and the Clerk to formulate the form for approval.
    2. The form should define a 'community' event; the Chairman and the Clerk to formulate the definition. The Chairman will circulate a definition for the community event for approval. **Action: Chairman and Clerk**

8. **To agree the arrangements for the laying of Wreaths at the War Memorials to mark VJ Day 80th anniversary on 15th August.**
The Chairman reported that Fr. Stephen Mills had confirmed his attendance at the Wreath Laying Ceremony scheduled to take place at the Village War Memorial at 10:00 a.m. on 15th August 2025. It was **agreed** that Wreath Laying Ceremony at St Johns Church War Memorial will take place at 11:00 a.m. on the same day. The Council resolved that the Office would write to RBWM to request that the Mayor be invited to Wreath laying ceremony. Cllrs. Brar, Regan and Kellaway were appointed to liaise with the local cadet group to request their participation in the ceremonies. It was also agreed that full details of the events would be published through the Council's notice boards, website and social media. **Action: Clerk and Cllrs Brar, Regan and R. Kellaway**

9. **To consider the proposal from Prospect regarding the tenancy agreement of Cemetery lodge.**
The Clerk had circulated a document outlining various tenancy options. Upon review, the Council **decided** to propose a 5% increase in rent and a twelve-month rental agreement with the existing tenant. The renewal fee charged by Prospect of £201.45 was agreed. The Clerk was instructed to correspond with Prospect Estate Agents to enquire whether a reduced renewal fee could be considered for the following year.
Action: Clerk

10. **To receive an update on the proposed devolved services contract with RBWM**
Cllr. Brar reported that a meeting with the representatives of RBWM has been scheduled for 19th August 2025.

11. **To receive an update on proposed diversion application of Cookham Footpath 41.**
The Counci**l agreed** to repeat last year's decision as nothing had changed since then.
Action: Chairman

12. **To consider and agree planting across the Cookham.**
Cllr. Regan reported that she had circulated an email outlining a proposed two-year planting plan across Cookham; however, it was noted that some Councillors and the Parish Office had not received the communication. The proposal included a map of potential planting locations, suggested species, estimated costs, and a list of relevant authorities to be approached for necessary permissions. Following discussion, the Council **agreed**, subject to all Councillors receiving a copy of the proposal, there being no dissent and it being within budget and/or strategic reserve, to delegate authority to Cllr. Regan to lead and progress the project, subject to ongoing liaison with the Clerk.
Action: Cllr. Regan

13. **To consider acquiring domain names to protect the identity and image of the Parish.**
The Chairman raised the possible desirability of acquiring apparent domain names associated with the Council to prevent potential misuse or misrepresentation. The Council retains its old domain name of *cookhamparishcouncil.org.uk* for that reason. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would obtain pricing information for the purchase of the domain names *cookhamparishcouncil.com* and *cookhamparishcouncil.co.uk*. and present these to September Council meeting for consideration and approval. **Action: Clerk**

14. **To consider upgrading the office phone and printer, and the installation of fireproof storage, under-desk cabinets, and accounting software for Council financial management.**
The Clerk advised that the office telephone and printer require urgent replacement. It was further noted that the office needs additional storage, including new cabinets, a fireproof cabinet, and an updated accounting tool. Council **agreed** that the telephone and printer may be replaced immediately, subject to current year's budget. The Clerk was requested to obtain estimates for the additional items and present them to the Council for consideration and approval. **Action: Clerk**

15. **To approve the necessary repairs to the boundary fence at the AMRG allotments.**
The Clerk reported that part of the fence at the Alfred Major Recreation Ground (AMRG) needed repair, with the cost of works estimated at £263.64 inclusive at VAT. Council **agreed** to proceed with the repair subject to the Clerk circulating the quotation to all Councillors and there being no dissent. **Action: Clerk**

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 reported that the application would not be presented to RBWM Panel in August and confirmed that no significant developments or changes had occurred in relation to the application since the last update. The Chairman noted that Jon Herbert at

Troy Planning had agreed (at no cost to the Council) to write to RBWM pointing out that the CNP should now be given full weight.

17. **To receive a report from the Chairman regarding the Neighbourhood Plan * and to consider-** Chairman had circulated a report regarding Neighbourhood Plan. This was **agreed**. It was also **agreed** to:
   a) **hold a launch event for the Cookham Neighbourhood Plan.**
   The Chairman proposed holding a launch event for the Neighbourhood Plan and holding a reception with it in recognition of and appreciation for the individuals who contributed significantly to its development and success. He suggested that the Council defers this event until after the RBWM has formally endorsed the Plan in September. Cllr Brar said that she had pointed out to RBWM that there was a time limit for their adoption of the CNP, so RBWM would be holding a special Council meeting scheduled for 9th September. The Chairman's proposal was **agreed**.
   Action: Clerk and Chairman
   b) **set up a new Planning Working Party**
   The Chairman reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (WP) had now been formally dissolved and proposed the establishment of a new WP to deal with the Council's representations in respect of the new BLP; and ongoing amendments and future work relating to the Neighbourhood Plan and any appropriate amendments in connection with the new BLP. This was **agreed**. It was **agreed** that a dedicated line item be included in the Council's budget for 2026/7 to support the WP's activities. The Chairman proposed the appointment of Cllr. Edwards to the WP; Cllr. Edwards proposed the Chairman. It was agreed that both be appointed. Other volunteers would be sought. The Council further resolved to invite all those organisations and individuals who had worked with the old CNPWP to contribute similarly to the new WP, except for Save Cookham (Tim Veale and Nic Dawkes).
   It was also agreed that a full hard copies of the CNP as approved be created for reference, including one with all the appendices. The Council approved payment to Nina Milner, the CNP's Administrator, to assist in the preparation of the hard copy version(s). **Action: Chairman**

18. **To consider and approve the revised Risk Assessment/Management document for the Council.**
   The Clerk had circulated the draft document to all Members prior to the meeting. The document was **accepted**, subject to the inclusion of a safeguarding provision relating to children and a small number of minor amendments. It was **agreed** that responsibility for finalising the document be delegated to the Chairman and the Clerk.
   Action: Chairman and Clerk

19. **To receive an update in relation to the Turkey farm application of 2022.**
   The Chairman offered his apologies for not having yet written to Planning Enforcement, as he was away. He confirmed that he would prioritise this action. **Action: Chairman**

20. **To consider Environment Agency proposal for fencing on wingwall by Odney Lock**
   Prior to the meeting, the Chairman had circulated an email containing the Environment Agency's (EA) proposal for the erection of a fence. Following extensive discussion, the Council **agreed** to accept the erection of the fence and to waive the relevant Byelaw(s) such as that relating to vehicular access for its construction, contingent upon the EA's agreement to reopen the bridge over the weir. The Chairman would write accordingly.
   It was further **agreed** that the Council would write in its response request that the existing ladder be not removed, as it provides a vital handhold for individuals who may find themselves in danger. **Action: Chairman**

The Council waived S.O. 3x to permit the meeting to continue for more than 2 hours.

21. Outside Bodies and Borough Councillor's reports.
Cllr. Brar reported (see item 17(a), that RBWM meeting to endorse the Cookham Neighbourhood Plan will take place on 9th September 2025

22. To re-introduce review of the Full Council Action List in Council meetings.
The Chairman advised that the Council's Action List will be reinstated to ensure that tasks are appropriately tracked and not overlooked. Due to time constraints, the Action List was not completed for the current meeting but will be completed for the next Council meeting. This was **agreed**.

23. Any other business (by permission of the Chairman and upon which no decisions may be made).
The Chairman announced and extended congratulations to the Clerk on the successful completion of the Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA) certification. He further informed the Council that the Clerk intends to register for the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) in November and will present a formal proposal, including associated costs, at the November meeting. The Councillors extended congratulations to the Clerk.
The Chairman suggested that, provided it could be supported by advertising, the Council might produce an informational booklet containing key details about the Parish, the Council, its functions and relevant contact information. Considering the time and resources required to undertake this project as well as the Clerk's upcoming professional studies and planned study leave and the anticipated expansion of Council responsibilities through the potential devolution of RBWM services it was **agreed** that the Clerk would first explore current staffing levels. **Action: Clerk**

The meeting closed at 9.38 pm

Next meeting Tuesday 2nd September 2025 at 7.30pm in the Community Room at Cookham Library.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Chairman …………………………………………
Dated……………………………….