COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Cookham Parish Council
Held in the Community Room of the Library on Tuesday 2nd September 2025

PRESENT: Cllrs. C. Aisladie, N. Bedwell, M. Brar, J. Edwards, M. Howard, M-L. Kellaway, R. Kellaway and L. Tull.

Also Present: Mrs. Deepa Kanthi (Clerk).
Ms. Caroline Blackall was interviewed by the Council in relation to the vacancy for the position of Parish Councillor.

Open Forum

1. **Apologies for Absence.**
   Cllr. B. Perry (Chairman), Cllrs. L. Austin, T Caen, H. Pleming, A-L Regan.
   As Chairman Perry was not present, Vice Chairman Cllr. M Howard took the Chair.

2. **Declarations of Interest.**
   None.

3. **To approve minutes from the Council Meeting on 5th August 2025.**
   These were **approved.**

4. **COMMITTEE REPORTS – To note the minutes of the following meetings:**
   i. **Planning Committee – 12th August 2025**. These were **noted**.
   Cllr. Edwards reported Planning Committee is low on members and urged all current members to attend meetings to maintain quorum and ensure effective decisions are made.

5. **FINANCE:**
   i. **To approve payments/receipts in August 2025**. These were **approved**.

6. **To agree works needed on the plots at Sutton Road and AMRG amounting in the sum of £504.00 plus VAT.**
   The Clerk had circulated quotations on works required on allotment plots prior to the meeting. She explained that all the works were necessary as new tenants have been appointed. These works were **approved**. **Action: Clerk**

7. **To consider and approve the selection and installation of a commemorative bench at AMRG in memory of the late Cllr. Eileen Bune**.
   The Clerk had circulated options concerning the proposed bench installation at AMRG in memory of late Cllr. Bune. Upon consideration, it was **agreed** by 4 votes to 3 that a five-foot teak garden bench be installed, with a budget of £850.00 for the cost of the bench and its installation, the expenditure to be drawn from the AMRG project fund. It was further **agreed** that the Clerk would liaise with Cllr. Aisladie to finalise both the precise location of the bench in AMRG and the wording to be inscribed on the commemorative plaque. **Action: Clerk and Cllr Aisladie**

8. **To consider and approve the small grant application for the annual Cookham High Street Christmas lights display.**
The Clerk reported that a small grants application had been received from the Cookham Christmas Society for the annual Cookham High Street Christmas lights display. Relevant documentation had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was **unanimously agreed** to award a donation of £1,000 to the Cookham Christmas Society for this purpose. The Clerk advised that, should the previously agreed £1,000 allocation for the Scout group be claimed, the Small Grants budget line item would be insufficient. It was therefore **agreed** that the Christmas lights donation be paid from the Small Grants donations line item and that any subsequent claim by the Scout group be funded from General Funds. Cllr. Edwards recommended that the Small Grants budget for the forthcoming financial year be reviewed and increased to accommodate future demands. This review was **agreed**.
Action: Clerk

9. **To approve buying the domain names for a 10-year period at a cost of £4.95 plus VAT for .co.uk per annum and £12.18+VAT for .com per annum.**
The Clerk explained that the annual costs for securing the domain names cookhamparishcouncil.co.uk and cookhamparishcouncil.com would be £4.95 and £12.18 respectively. Both purchases for 10 years were **approved**.
Action: Clerk

10. **To agree any suitable revisions, in the light of comments received from Odney and the National Trust, to the proposed changes to the Byelaws governing Odney Common and the Moor and agree to seek from RBWM the changes proposed**.
Cllr. Perry had circulated an email prior to the meeting outlining feedback received in relation to the proposed amendments to the Byelaws. It was **noted** that Odney's sole comment was to a request for a limitation of six individuals per group. Upon discussion, Cllr Edwards expressed concern regarding the enforcement of such a limit, which the Council acknowledged. It therefore **agreed** not to seek such a limit. The Council **agreed** again the ban on barbecues on Odney Common. It was noted that no formal response had been received from the National Trust. The Council was therefore content to propose to RBWM the amendments it had previously agreed.

11. **To receive and update on Cookham Lock Site at Odney Common.**
The Chairman noted that Cllr. Perry had circulated an email prior to the meeting, the contents of which were deemed self-explanatory. The Council **unanimously agreed** with the comments and recommendations set out.

12. **To discuss and decide on the possible usage of Odney Common for parking for charity concert on 1 November 2025.**
After discussion it was **agreed** by five votes to nil, with two abstentions, to waive the Byelaws to permit a one-off use of the Common, subject to the conditions that the event be properly managed, actively monitored, and the area left clean and free of litter after the event. After discussion it was further **agreed** that the organisers should be advised to liaise with the National Trust and the Odney Club regarding the potential use of their car parking facilities. **Action: Cllr. Perry and Clerk**

13. **To receive an update on the Verges Contract.**
The Chairman reported that the Council appears to have been successful in securing the Verges contract. He reported that a meeting had been convened with a representative from RBWM and attended by Cllrs. Perry and Brar, the Clerk, and himself. He also reported that it was agreed that RBWM representatives would accompany Cookham Parish Council representatives on a site visit to inspect the verges proposed for transfer. It had been further agreed with RBWM that, should additional tasks arise beyond those

previously discussed, the associated costs would be subject to renegotiation following consultation with our contractors. It was also agreed with RBWM that the verges will be left at a certain standard before the takeover. All this was subject to contract. RBWM confirmed that a formal contract would be drafted once all terms had been finalised and confirmed. The Chairman noted that, subject to finalisation, the contract is scheduled to commence on 30th September 2026. He also reminded that the Council that the Parish Council will be required to adhere to the appropriate tendering procedures.

14. **To consider taking action on the issues caused by overgrowing vegetation in AMRG raised by the residents of Groves Way**.
The Clerk had circulated an email detailing concerns raised by residents of Groves Way regarding the overhanging branches of Oak trees growing in AMRG close to its boundary. Residents felt that excessive foliage, including acorn drop in summer and leaf fall in autumn, was adversely affecting their enjoyment of their gardens. Additionally, complaints were received concerning rat infestations, allegedly linked to the overgrowth of vegetation on adjacent land. Cllr. Brar reported that the land in question is owned by RBWM. Following discussion, it was **agreed**, in a spirit of good neighbourliness, to trim back the trees. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should obtain quotations for the necessary works and present them at the next Council meeting. It was also **agreed** that the Clerk should write to RBWM regarding the land mentioned, requesting that they undertake appropriate maintenance. **Action: Clerk**

15. To consider/approve the welcome boards at AMRG.
The Clerk circulated a quotation for the proposed installation of welcome boards at AMRG. It was **unanimously agreed** that all existing signage should be removed and that two new boards be installed, one at the entrance from Hillcrest Avenue and the other at the entrance from the High Road. In view of the number of decisions required to finalise the design and placement details, the Council **resolved** to delegate authority to Cllrs. Edwards and Blackall to propose the necessary arrangements; with a comprehensive plan outlining the final proposals to be presented at the next meeting of the Council.
Action: Cllrs. Edwards, Blackall and Clerk

16. To finalise the arrangements including date, time, guest list and budget for the Neighbourhood launch party.
Following the Council's approval at its last meeting of Cllr. Perry's proposal of a 'launch party' to celebrate the successful completion of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and to recognise and appreciate the individuals who contributed to its development, following discussion, it was **agreed** that the arrangements for the launch party would be delegated to Chairman Perry and the Clerk. A budget of £450.00 was approved, to be funded from the Neighbourhood Plan budget item. **Action: Cllr. Perry and Clerk**

17. To consider and arrange for Blessings of the Commonwealth War Graves in November.
It was **unanimously agreed** to proceed with the Blessing of the War Graves, following the precedent set by the ceremony conducted last year. It was further **agreed** to publicise the event via the Council's notice boards, website, Facebook page, and other relevant social media platforms. Cllr. Perry was requested to include a notice regarding the Blessing in his forthcoming article for the Parish Magazine. In addition, it was reported that two of the War Graves appear to have deteriorated. Accordingly, it was **agreed** that the Clerk should write to the War Graves Commission to seek guidance.
Action: Cllr. Perry and Clerk

18. **To consider and arrange for laying of the wreath for the Remembrance Day in November**.
    It was **unanimously agreed** that two wreaths shall be laid on Remembrance Day at the respective war memorials within the Parish. It was further **agreed** that Cllr. Aisladie shall lay the wreath at the Village War Memorial, and Cllr. Howard shall lay the wreath at the Dean War Memorial. The Clerk was asked to make all necessary arrangements. It was also **agreed** that the cost of the wreaths shall be met from the General Funds of the Council. **Action: Clerk**

19. **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 is unlikely to come before the Pannel in the foreseeable future. Cllr. Bedwell suggested that Cllr. Howard should write to RBWM to request them to consider an alternative location for the crematorium at Oakley Court cemetery. Cllr. Howard said he would take the suggestion to RBWM.
    Action: Cllr. Howard

20. **Outside Bodies and Borough Councillor's reports.**
    The Chairman reported that the Council has been update with the progress of the Verges contact in item 13.
    Cllr. Bedwell reported that Pinder Hall is actively seeking to raise funds for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the building. He noted that discussions are currently ongoing between the church commission and the Pinder Hall committee as to the potential way forward for the Hall.

21. **Any other business (by permission of the Chairman and upon which no decisions may be made).**
    The Chairman reported that an email had been received from Mr. Strzelecki in which he expressed concerns regarding what he felt were excessive noise levels associated with recent Rock the Manor event held at Odney. Mr. Strzelecki said that the noise appeared to be louder than in the previous year and that he had submitted a complaint to RBWM. He further noted that RBWM had responded that no noise disturbance had been identified. Mr. Strzelecki requested that the Council take appropriate action to prevent similar disturbances that might arise from the forthcoming October Fest and other such events. The Chairman noted that only a limited number of residents had submitted complaints. Cllr. Bedwell confirmed that he had also lodged a complaint. The Council discussed the matter and agreed that residents who experience noise disturbance should be encouraged to report such incidents directly to the police.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Next meeting Tuesday 7th October 2025 at 7.30pm in the Community Room at Cookham Library.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

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