

**COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Cookham Parish Council**  
**Held in the Community Room of the Library on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 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), Ms. Caroline Blackall, Mr Christian Franke

**Open Forum**

Cllr. Brar reported that two applications concerning Briar Glen are scheduled to be presented to the Planning Panel at RBWM on 16th October 2025. She informed the Council that she will be away on that date and therefore unable to speak on the applications. Cllrs. Howard and Edwards agreed to represent on the Council's behalf.

Cllr. Brar announced that the Mayor's charity event will be held on 7th November at Pinder Hall, with details to follow. She urged Councillors to attend, noting that proceeds will go towards the aid of Elizabeth House.

Cllr Regan proposed that Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) candidates could assist with the help required for bulb planting, with the Council signing off their DofE projects in return. Cllr. Aisladie noted that Cookham Tidy already engages in this practice, while Cllr. Edwards highlighted the legal requirements involved in undertaking such activities.

**1. Apologies for Absence.**

Cllrs. Caen and Tull.

The Chairman reported that Cllr. Pleming had submitted her resignation from her role as Councillor. It was **agreed** that the Chairman would formally acknowledge and accept the resignation. The Chairman also noted that following the resignation statutory procedures would need to be followed. The Council **agreed** to ensure that all relevant steps are completed in line with statutory requirements.

**Action: Chairman and Clerk**

**2. Declarations of Interest.**

None

**3. To co-opt Caroline Blackall to fill the Councillor vacancy created upon the demise of Cllr. Bune.**

Prior to the Council meeting held in September, Ms. Caroline Blackall was interviewed in relation to the vacancy created from the death of Cllr. Bune. Ms. Blackall was **unanimously** and formally appointed as a Councillor.

**Action: Clerk**

**4. To co-opt a Councillor to fill the vacancy created upon the resignation of Cllr. Moore.**

Prior to the Council meeting, Mr. Christian Frake was interviewed for the vacant Councillor position, which had arisen following the resignation of Cllr. Moore. Following the interview, Mr. Franke was **unanimously** and formally appointed to the position.

**Action: Clerk**

**5. To approve minutes from Council Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025. \***

These were **approved**.

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

- i. **Planning Committee – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025.** These were **noted**.

**7. FINANCE:**

- i. **To approve payments/receipts in September 2025.** These were **approved**.

ii. **To ratify the cost for the new memorial bench at Alfred Major Recreation Ground (AMRG).**

The Clerk noted that the funds sanctioned at the September meeting amounted to £850.00; however, the actual expenditure would total £945.00, resulting in a difference of £95.00. It was **agreed** to proceed with the purchase and installation of memorial bench. It was also **agreed** that a dedication ceremony would be held following the installation of the bench. Authority for organising the ceremony was delegated to the Clerk and the Chairman.

**Action: Chairman and Clerk**

iii. **To agree to enter into a new tenancy agreement for Cemetery Lodge at the increased rent proposed by the Council.**

The Clerk reported that the tenants had agreed to the proposed rent increase; however, the estate agents initially issued the tenancy contract under the name of previous Clerk, necessitating a reissue of the documents. The Council is now awaiting the tenants' signatures on the revised contract, and it was **agreed** that the tenancy agreement would be entered into upon the receipt of the revised signed documents.

**Action: Clerk**

iv. **To renew the membership of the SLCC.**

It was **agreed** to renew the SLCC membership.

The Clerk advised that this would require the virement of funds from one budget line item to another, and authority was **granted** to the Clerk to carry out the necessary financial adjustment.

**Action: Clerk**

v. **To arrange the installation of two Christmas trees.**

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had circulated quotations for the purchase and installation of two Christmas trees. Members expressed concern regarding the quality of the trees and lighting provided the previous year, noting they had not been satisfactory. The Clerk was therefore requested to raise these concerns with the contractor before placing the order. The total cost, including purchase, installation, delivery, lighting and electrical arrangements, and subsequent removal of the trees, amounted to £1,472 plus VAT. As there was no designated budget line for this expenditure, it was **agreed** that the cost would be met from the General Funds. On that basis, the Council **agreed** to proceed with the purchase and installation.

**Action: Clerk**

vi. **To obtain Adobe software to enable editing of pdfs.**

The Clerk noted that the office is increasingly receiving documents in PDF format, which are difficult to edit without appropriate software. It was noted the cost of a suitable Adobe purchase is £152.00 plus VAT pa. It was **agreed** to purchase Adobe software to facilitate efficient document handling and editing. It was noted that the allocated budget for subscriptions for the current financial year was not sufficient to cover the cost. Following discussion, it was agreed to vire from the Advertisement budget to cover the cost of this subscription, as well as any additional subscriptions required during the remainder of the year.

**Action: Clerk**

8. **To decide the terms of the renewal of the grazing licence on the Alleyn's Road allotment field.**

The Clerk had circulated a draft contract for the grazing licence at Alleyn's Lane. The terms of the licence were **agreed** by the Council. It was also **agreed** to request a 5% increase on last year's rent, setting this year's rental amount at £355.00. **Action: Clerk**

**9. To agree the changes required by the external auditors for the 2025-26 audit**

**9.1 To provide an update on the new Assertion 10-** The Clerk had circulated a document outlining the changes necessary to ensure compliance with audit requirements for the coming year. It was reported that several of the requirements were already being met; however, the Council must formally adopt an IT policy to satisfy the remaining obligations.

**9.2 To adopt a new IT policy.** The Clerk had circulated a draft IT policy for consideration. The Chairman reported that he had reviewed the draft and identified a few amendments that were required. Authority was therefore delegated to the Chairman and the Clerk to make the necessary revisions and present the updated policy for formal approval at the next Council meeting in November.

**Action: Chairman and Clerk**

**10. To appoint members to the Planning Committee.**

Cllr. Edwards reported that, following the death of Cllr. Bune and the resignations of Cllrs. Moore and Fleming, the Planning Committee is currently short of three members and is struggling to meet the quorum requirement of four. She requested that additional members consider joining the Committee. Cllr. Edwards further noted that, due to procedural amendments introduced by RBWM, the Council may need to hold an additional Zoom meeting. Concerns were raised regarding the validity of such a meeting if conducted online. It was agreed that this matter would be clarified with RBWM and subsequently brought to the Planning Committee meeting scheduled for the following week. Cllrs. Blackall and Franke agreed to join the Planning Committee.

**11. To receive an update on the Devolution of Services Contract from RBWM.**

Cllr. Howard reported that a meeting had been convened with a representative from RBWM, Mr. Christopher Capper, who visited Cookham to demonstrate the mapping system currently used by RBWM. During the meeting, some areas of concern were identified. The Clerk, Cllr. Howard, and Mr. Capper subsequently conducted a site visit to some of the locations within the scope of the project. It was agreed with Mr. Capper that: (1) access to the mapping system would be granted to Cookham; (2) all verges would be maintained to a defined standard; and (3) CPC would revert to RBWM with revised costings following discussions with contractors, as additional items had been added to the scope of work. Cllr. Howard further noted that, should the terms and costings be agreed, CPC would be required to initiate a formal tender process. The Council **agreed** that discussions should continue accordingly.

**Action: Cllr Howard and Clerk**

**12. To receive an update on the water leak at cemetery lodge and decide on replacement of the water tank, repair of damage, replacement or repair to the consumer board and any further action.**

The Clerk had circulated an email prior to the meeting regarding a water leak reported at the Cemetery lodge. She confirmed in the email that the leak had been repaired following a visit from a plumber, who also recommended replacing the water tank. Two quotations for the replacement of the tank were obtained and circulated ahead of the meeting, along with two additional quotes for repairs to the roof, which had been damaged due to the leak. Cllr. Bedwell suggested that, rather than replacing the water tank, the Council should consider improving the EPC rating by replacing the boiler, which may yield greater efficiency. Following an extended discussion, it was **agreed** to delegate authority to the Clerk and Cllr. Bedwell to assess the options and present a recommendation to the Council at the next meeting in November. It was also **agreed** that any emergency works required in the interim may be undertaken with the joint authority of the Clerk and Cllr. Bedwell.

**Action: Cllr Bedwell and Clerk**

**13. To consider taking action on the issues caused by overgrowing vegetation raised by the residents of Groves Way.**

Following from the decision made in September Council meeting the Clerk had circulated quotation obtained from R Watts to do the remedial work on the trees. It was **agreed** that the work should be completed. The funds will be allocated from budget item 68.

**Action: Clerk**

**14. To receive an update on the arrangements for the Neighbourhood Plan Launch party.**

The Clerk reported that the invites had gone out for the Neighbourhood Plan launch party which is scheduled on 17<sup>th</sup> October between 6.30pm-8pm at the Community room. The Clerk asked the members to RSVP by 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

**15. 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 has been withdrawn. She said that the application might come back again.

**16. To receive a report from the Chairman regarding the Neighbourhood Plan (CNP).**

The Chairman reported that the Cookham Neighbourhood Plan was formally adopted by RBWM at its meeting held on 9th September 2025. He expressed thanks to Cllr. Brar for her efforts in encouraging RBWM to convene the meeting. The Chairman further noted that, as a result of the Plan's adoption, the Parish Council will now receive 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds without a cap instead of 15% capped at £200 per housing unit. This will make a substantial difference to receipts.

Cllr. R Kellaway reported that he will present a hard copy of the CNP to the Maire of St Benoit when the Twinning Group visit later this month..

**17. To approve a new Project to be added within Appendix 8 to the Neighbourhood Plan.**

The Chairman had circulated a report prior to the meeting. Summarising it, he explained that paragraph 9.4 of the CNP as adopted expressly says of Appendix 8 that "*projects in the Parish include, but are not limited to, those identified in Appendix 8*" and that "*The Parish Council will continue to review projects and ideas over time, and which may include new projects*". Appendix 8 itself is also clear that: "*The projects are presented in this appendix. They will be kept under review and may change over time*". He had enquired of RBWM about this. They are not willing to change their copy of the CNP as agreed at the referendum and adopted by RBWM but acknowledge that this right was itself agreed and adopted. They advise that the Council should adopt a formal procedure for such change and keep an updated copy of the CNP on its website noting the dates of any changes to Appendix 8, the Projects.

The Council discussed the procedure suggested by the Chairman. In particular, a vote was taken on whether the consultation should include a hard copy leaflet delivered to all addresses in the Parish. After consideration of the cost/benefit as illustrated by earlier consultations on the CNP, on a vote, the Council decided against such a leaflet.

Accordingly, the Council unanimously **agreed** the following process for amending the Projects in, and hence Appendix 8 of, the CNP:

1. The Council formulates its proposal relating to a potential new Project (or a change to an existing one). The process of formulation should include obtaining advice from professional planning advisers. The proposal as formulated should include the reasoning behind the proposal.

2. The Council consults by:
  - (a) publishing the proposal on its website and Facebook page, using all social media available to it; advertising in the Parish Magazine; and attempting to obtain press/media coverage;
  - (b) calling at least one public meeting about it using the same methods; and
  - (c) consulting the same groups/individuals who were on the original Plan Working Party, with such additions as it thinks appropriate if new relevant groups have come into existence.
3. The Council re-consults its planning advisers on the results of the consultation.
4. The Council decides upon adoption/amendment/refusal of the proposal.
5. Any amendment should be included in the Appendix 8 on our website, including the date of amendment, and notified to RBWM as such.

The Chairman then summarised the problem caused by the cessation of burials at the two Church of England churches in the Parish (and the absence of burials at the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches). This means that only the Council's own cemetery in Long Lane is available for burials (and interment of ashes) in the Parish. The original cemetery is full. An extension was bought in 1995 from the then owner of the cemetery Field, Mr Lovejoy. It is already significantly used. The population of the Parish is rising due to new housing. As agreed earlier this year by the Council, it is therefore desirable for the Council to obtain a further extension to the cemetery. The Chairman felt that this was of sufficient significance that it should be a new Project. His paper included suggested wording for a new Project for the CNP accordingly.

The Council discussed this suggestion. It **agreed** unanimously in principle to move forward with the agreed process with a view to creating such a Project in the CNP. It therefore **agreed** unanimously that the Chairman should present a paper at November Council embodying such a proposed Project with supporting reasons in accordance with stage 1 of the agreed process.

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

#### **18. To decide on volunteers to attend BALC AGM 2025.**

It was **agreed** that the Clerk would circulate the details and the agenda and ask for volunteers to attend the AGM.

#### **19. To decide whether to have a stall at the Cookham Christmas street fair.**

Cllr. Regan declared an interest. She proposed that the Parish Council should have a stall at the Christmas Street Fair (CSF). The Council **agreed** to participate and Cllr. Regan was tasked with preparing a pitch and making the necessary arrangements. A budget of £250 was allocated for the setup and associated costs. As no budget was allocated for this item, it was agreed that the required funds would be drawn from the general fund. The Chairman and Cllr. Brar volunteered to be present at the stall during the event.

**Action: Cllr Regan and Clerk**

#### **20. Outside Bodies and Borough Councillors' reports.**

The Chairman reported from the Patient Participation Group (PPG) that the gate at the medical centre had not been installed and noted that the Council's comments on the matter appeared to have carried weight. He further reported that a note from the Practice Manager to the PPG which appeared to try to specify a meeting schedule and indicate that the purpose of the PPG was to serve the Practice had not been well received. The

PPG had responded that they would determine their own meeting schedule and existed to represent patients to the Practice.

Cllr Bedwell reported further on Pinder Hall, including on a meeting between the Chairman, Cllr Howard and himself with Andy Coulter and Laurie representing Pinder Hall. The discussion had been general, but we had expressed our support for the Hall as benefitting the community. They would consider the discussion and further liaison was expected.

**21. To review the Full Council Action List.**

Due to time constraints this item was deferred to be reviewed at the next meeting.

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

The Chairman reported that WildCookham and Odney Estates had agreed to plant Yellow Rattle on the part of Odney Common south and west of the Heritage Centre designed to 'assume control' of the area, which involves killing off all or most of the grass – which is an act technically contrary to the Byelaws. After discussion, as its presence is confined to the designated wildflower area, the Council **agreed** not to raise any objection.

**23. Under section 1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960) and under Standing order 3d to agree that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted below that the public be temporarily excluded and be instructed to withdraw**

**24. To agree pay rise in line with NALC recommendations for Ms Hunter.**

After discussion, the Council unanimously **agreed** the NALC recommended pay rise for Ms Hunter.

The meeting closed at 09.50 pm

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

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Chairman .....

Dated.....