

Sibford Ferris Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, held on **Thursday 21st May 2026** at **7:15pm** at Sibford School

The meeting started late at 7:38pm due to the Annual Parish Meeting over running.

Present: Cllrs Ginny Bennett, Michael Gordon, David Abecassis, Clerk.

In attendance: 1 member of the public.

1. **Election of Chairman** - It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Bennett as the Chairman. Cllr Bennett completed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
2. **Apologies for absence** - None.
3. **Members' declarations of interest for items on the agenda** – None.
4. **Proposal to co-opt Edward Rossiter onto the Parish Council** – Proposed and agreed. Edward completed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
5. **Election of Vice-Chairman** - It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Gordon as the Vice-Chairman.
6. **Co-option to fill remaining vacancy** – Clerk to readvertise the vacancy.
7. **Public participation session** – None.
8. **To appoint an Internal Controls Councillor** – It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Gordon as the Internal Controls Councillor.
9. **To agree any changes to the bank mandate due to the change in councillor membership** – It was proposed and agreed to remove Andrew Meyler from the bank mandate and add on Cllr Rossiter.
10. **To approve the minutes of the Parish Council (PC) meeting held on 18th March 2026** - The minutes were proposed, agreed, and duly signed.
11. **Outstanding matters/actions from previous meetings**
 - i) Update re contact with Deanfield Homes regarding the planned gap in the hedge, and alternative pedestrian access to the site – Highways say they are not responsible for the hedge and that hedges belong to the adjacent landowner. The adjacent landowner is Deanfield Homes as far as the PC are aware and they claim the hedge is not theirs. **Clerk to go back to Deanfield Homes to give them the information that Highways have provided and see if they agree that the hedge is theirs and therefore they can make a gap in it.** If Deanfield Homes believe their deeds show it does not belong to them then it is possible the hedge is still owned by the previous owner of the land before they sold it to a developer. The Clerk had still not had a response to the query regarding why some of the hedge has been taken out on Hook Norton Road and continues to chase.
 - ii) Update re request to transfer remaining S106 funds allocated to a bus shelter to Sibford Gower Primary School – No further update.
 - iii) Update re Pitch Hill Field – It appears that the cost to get this done by a solicitor will be around £1500 and they can't guarantee that the request to register the land will be accepted due to the type of paperwork that the PC have available. The Clerk could attempt to submit an application directly without the support of a solicitor, which is low cost, however the Land Registry website suggests that registrations are complex and therefore they advise that a solicitor should be appointed. It was agreed that the **Clerk should try to get together the relevant documents and attempt a request for first registration directly.**
 - iv) Update re new website – The website provider has been instructed and they are currently waiting for the gov.uk domain to be confirmed. Once that has come through they can create the website and it should be available within a few weeks. The current webmaster of the village website has requested that the PC continue to pay for the village website as it is a valued part of the community. The PC agreed that they are happy to continue to pay their share of the costs of the village website.

12. Concerns raised by residents regarding speeding on Main Street – After discussion regarding the various options for speed reduction in the parish, it was agreed that the **Clerk should contact the police to ask if a speed van could occasionally be used in the village.** Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) may also be an option, but this depends on whether a licence could be obtained from Highways due to legal requirements regarding line of sight from the VAS and safe access to the VAS. **Clerk to contact Highways to find out if it would be possible to obtain a licence, and if so, look into options and costs of suitable VASs to be brought to the next meeting for consideration.**

1 member of the public left the meeting at 8:30pm.

13. Planning applications received

26/00562/F - The Ark, Main Street, Sibford Ferris. Alterations and extensions and erection of new outbuilding.

No representation made. APPROVED.

26/00800/TCA - Home Close, Main Street, Sibford Ferris. T1. Ash Fraxinus excelsior - Removal of tree to ground level. **No representation made. APPROVED.**

14. Play area – Updates re repairs and any other issues – No further updates. **Clerk to chase the Outdoor Play People to find out when they will be making repairs to the equipment.**

15. Finance

- i) Confirmation of the bank balances as at 14.05.26 of £253.98 and £16,271.97 – Cllr Bennett confirmed the balances stated are correct.
- ii) Proposal to renew the insurance policy with Zurich at a cost of £500 (no change from last year) – Proposed and agreed.
- iii) Confirmation of payments made since the last meeting using delegated powers: Proposed and agreed.

27.03.26	CDC	Annual lease for play area	£30.00
20.04.26	Lloyds	Account fee	£4.25
29.04.26	Zen	Gold package	£215.86
29.04.26	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Play area mowing Mar	£29.51
29.04.26	CDC	Half yearly charge for dog bin emptying	£302.02
29.04.26	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Fuel surcharge	£2.40
29.04.26	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Play area mowing Apr	£59.02
29.04.26	Kirsty Buttle	Salary and office Apr 26	£247.37
29.04.26	HMRC	Tax Apr	£59.40
30.04.26	NEST	Pension Apr	£17.24

- iv) To note the following receipts: Noted.

08.04.26	HMRC	VAT Refund	£429.21
14.04.26	CDC	Precept	£5,982.50
09.04.26	Lloyds	Interest	£4.80
11.05.26	Lloyds	Interest	£6.19

- v) To confirm that due to an error, the annual donations (as per the table below) were paid twice within the 25/26 financial year, therefore no payment should be made in the 26/27 financial year, and will be considered again in May 27 for the 27/28 financial year – It was proposed and agreed to make the Citizens Advice payment again this year but to wait until next year to donate to the other organisations. **Clerk to arrange payment.**

Citizens Advice	£25.00
Sibford Village Hall	£400.00
Sibford Scene	£50.00

16. Annual Governance and Accountability Return

- a) To receive the Internal Auditor's Report for 25/26 - The Internal Auditor's Report was received and a summary of the issues raised are listed below with the PC responses noted in red.
*As regards question O on the internal audit, I have ticked no despite there being a Privacy Notice, Publication Scheme, Data Protection Policy, corporate e-mail address, and an IT Policy, as to date there is no accessibility statement on the website. But I understand Sibford Ferris Parish Council have instructed a new website which is launching soon which will have an accessibility statement, so I expect this to be remedied soon. **The new website will include an Accessibility Statement.***
- i) To appoint an Internal Auditor for the 26/27 financial year - It was proposed and agreed to appoint Sue Rowley as the Internal Auditor for 26/27.
- ii) To complete and approve for signature the AGAR Annual Governance Statement for 25/26 - It was proposed and agreed to tick 'yes' to all statements except statement 10, which is ticked 'no' due to the lack of an accessibility statement on the website, and statement 9, which is 'N/A' as the PC is not a trustee, and for the Chairman and Clerk to sign the document.
- iii) To approve for signing the AGAR Accounting Statements for 25/26 - It was proposed and agreed that the Accounting Statements were approved and that the Chairman should sign the document.
- iv) To approve completion and signing of the AGAR Certificate of Exemption for 25/26 - The PC confirmed eligibility to claim exemption and approved the signing of the document by the RFO and Chairman.
- v) To confirm the dates for the Notice of Public Rights for the 25/26 Financial Year – 3rd June to 14th July 2026 - Proposed and agreed.

17. Planning decisions received

26/00193/F – The Small House, Small House Lane, Sibford Ferris. Demolition of existing single storey extensions and garage and erection of new single and two storey extensions. **Approved.**

26/00590/TCA - Applegrove, Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris. Tree A (Conifer) circa 5m tall crown lifting (1m) and reduction (2m) as beginning to hinder large vehicles entering the property and walkers using the footpath. Tree B (False Acacia) circa 20m tall crown reduction (5m) and thinning to reduce sail and allow more light into garden. Tree C (Beech) circa 25m tall crown reduction (5m) and thinning. Tree has significant sail and branches fully overhang both Hook Norton Road and Back Lane reduction will also allow more light into the front garden. Tree D (Maple 1) circa 7m tall crown thinning (1m-2m) to allow more light into the front garden. Tree E (Maple 2) circa 7m tall crown thinning (1m-2m) to allow more light into the front garden. Tree F (Maple 3) circa 7m tall crown thinning (1m-2m) and thinning to allow more light into the front garden. Tree G (Oak) circa 25m tall crown reduction (5m) and thinning to remove some dead limbs and again reduce sail. **Refused.**

18. To re-adopt the following policies with no changes made: Proposed and agreed.

- i) Standing Orders
- ii) Financial Regulations
- iii) Data Protection Policy
- iv) Freedom of Information Policy
- v) Privacy Notice
- vi) Data Breach Policy
- vii) Role Holder Privacy Notice
- viii) Subject Access Request Procedure
- ix) Scheme of Delegation
- x) Publication Scheme
- xi) Disciplinary Policy
- xii) Grievance Policy
- xiii) Risk Assessment
- xiv) Records Retention Policy
- xv) Complaints Procedure
- xvi) Code of Conduct
- xvii) Sexual and General Harassment Policy
- xviii) Biodiversity Policy
- xix) IT Policy

19. To adopt the following amended policies: Proposed and agreed.

- i) Publication Scheme
- ii) Financial Control and Internal Audit Procedure

20. Information exchange – Cllr Rossiter was asked about whether the school have considered stop signage on the driveway to the school. He advised they are looking into it but on the basis that no parents should be coming in and out of that driveway users of that entrance should be staff who should already know that they need to stop there. The school also wonder if part of the problem could be visibility issues due to the parked cars on the main road. **Clerk to ask Highways if it would be an option to put zigzag lines or double yellow lines a few feet either side of the junction.**

21. Proposal to exclude the public and the press to discuss a staff matter (item 22) – Proposed and agreed.

Clerk left the meeting at 9pm.

22. To review the Clerk's payscale – current scale is SCP27 – After discussion it was proposed and agreed to increase the Clerk's payscale to SCP29, to be backdated to 1st April 2026.

Meeting closed @ 9:15pm.

Date of next meeting – 30th July 2026

Signed..... Date.....