

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF DUCKLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7.30 pm  
in the Lilac Room, Ducklington Village Hall

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### **Present**

- Cllr David Duthie Chairman (elected at this meeting)
- Cllr Matt Barker Vice-Chairman (elected at this meeting)
- Cllr Jo George
- Cllr Paul Lishman
- Cllr John Dunsdon
- Cllr Liam Mackenzie District Councillor
- Cllr Thomas Ashby County Councillor
- Cllr Angela Dowley (co-opted at this meeting)
- Cllr Peter Almgill (co-opted at this meeting)

### **In Attendance**

- Thom Rhodes - Incoming Clerk and Proper Officer

### **Apologies for Absence**

- Cllr John Smyth
  - Cllr Sarah Varnom
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### **55.26 Election of Chairman**

The meeting was opened by the outgoing Clerk, Steve Smith, who called for nominations for Chairman. Cllr Duthie was proposed and seconded; no other candidates came forward.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr David Duthie be elected as Chairman of Ducklington Parish Council for the ensuing year, unopposed. Cllr Duthie signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and reconvened the meeting as Chairman.

### **56.26 Election of Vice Chairman**

The Chairman called for nominations for Vice Chairman. Cllr Barker was proposed; members noted his good service over the preceding years. No other candidates came forward.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr Matthew Barker be elected as Vice Chairman of Ducklington Parish Council for the ensuing year, unopposed. Cllr Barker signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

### **57.26 Co-option of New Members**

The Clerk reported that the Council was below its required membership following the recent elections. Two candidates, Angela Dowley and Peter Almgill (prior councillor), had been identified for co-option. Both candidates were proposed, seconded, and duly co-opted.

**RESOLVED:** That Angela Dowley and Peter Almgill be co-opted as members of Ducklington Parish Council.

**ACTION:** Clerk to issue co-option forms.

### **58.26 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr John Smyth and Cllr Sarah Varnom.

### **59.26 Public Participation**

Standing Orders were suspended to allow a period of public participation. No members of the public attended to address the Council during this period.

### **60.26 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 1 April 2026**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1 April 2026 had been circulated in advance. Members confirmed they were content with the record.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **61.26 County and District Council Matters**

#### **a. County Councillor's Report – Cllr Thomas Ashby**

The County Councillor's annual report had been circulated to all members in advance and was received. The Councillor noted they had been in contact with the new OCC Cabinet Member on 12 May 2026 to raise all divisional matters, including potholes and road infrastructure. Discussion around new anti-theft schemes for local parishes.

#### **b. District Councillor's Report - Cllr Liam Mackenzie**

Cllr Mackenzie reported that he had received his official induction as District Councillor on the day of the meeting. He reported on the following matters:

**Faded Street Signs:**

A number of street signs across Ducklington were noted as being in poor condition, including on Starnham Road. Cllr Mackenzie confirmed he would request replacements from the District Council.

**Bartholomew Close Meadow / Gill Mill Quarry:**

A resident (Nigel) had raised the planning proposal for the Bartholomew Close Meadow bridge. The Council had previously resolved not to comment on this matter. It was noted that the bridge is not an absolute commitment but that consultation will continue, subject to Environment Agency approval. Potential parking displacement near Kirby Road was noted as an issue to monitor.

**Chicken Broiler Breeder Farm, Bampton (PD Hooks):**

Cllr Mackenzie reported that approximately 240 objections had been submitted against this proposal. The farmers are planning a community open day; the date is yet to be confirmed.

**Potholes:**

Concerns were raised about a number of unresolved potholes. A temporary repair near the duck pond had been made approximately two weeks previously but the most significant pothole had been missed. A red-priority repair request has been submitted. The pothole on Witney Road has remained unrepaired since approximately January 2026. The Chairman noted that the pothole on the parish-owned road around the pond will be addressed.

**Flood Prevention Projects:**

It was proposed that the Council compile a list of potential flood prevention projects so that it may respond promptly should relevant funding become available.

**ACTION:** Cllr Mackenzie to formally request replacement of faded street signs from the District Council, including Starnham Road as a priority.

**ACTION:** Parish Council to compile a list of potential flood prevention project targets for future funding opportunities.

**ACTION:** Parish Council to contact G. Hill & Sons to request the pond-road pothole is addressed alongside the car park drainage works.

**62.26 Parish Councillors - Disclosure of Interests**

Members were reminded of their obligation to disclose interests on agenda items. Cllr Matt Barker declared a personal interest in item 69.26(c) (The Moors reserved matters application, 24/02878/RES) on the grounds that his property is situated opposite the application site. He confirmed he would withdraw from discussion and voting on that item.

## **63.26 Review of Delegation Arrangements, Committee Appointments and Representatives**

### **a. Terms of Reference**

The Clerk noted that a full review of the terms of reference for committees had not been possible at this meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That no changes be made to the terms of reference for existing committees at this meeting; any review to be deferred to a future meeting.

### **b. Appointment of Members to Existing Committees and Representatives to Other Organisations**

After discussion, the following appointments were confirmed:

#### **Urgency Committee (minimum four members):**

- Cllr Duthie (Chairman)
- Cllr Barker
- Cllr Almgill
- Cllr TBC

Additional members to be confirmed at a future meeting.

#### **Finance Committee (minimum three members):**

- Cllr Almgill (Chairman)
- Cllr Duthie
- Cllr Barker

#### **Personnel Committee (minimum three members):**

- Cllr Almgill
- Cllr Varnom

Additional members to be confirmed at a future meeting.

#### **Projects Committee (minimum three members):**

- Cllr George
- Cllr Barker
- Cllr Duthie

Additional members to be confirmed at a future meeting.

**Representatives to other organisations:**

- Transport Group Representative: Cllr Lishman.
- Village Hall Committee Representatives: Cllr Varnom, Cllr George
- Ducklington Hardwick and Yelford Charity: Cllr Duthie
- Lower Windrush Valley Project Steering Group: Cllr George
- Allotments: Cllr John Dunsdon

**c. New Committees**

The former Clerk's recommendation that one or two councillors be appointed as Ducklington Sports Club Liaison Representative(s) was discussed. The Council resolved against making this appointment at this time.

**RESOLVED:** That no Ducklington Sports Club Liaison Representative be appointed at this time.

**64.26 Annual Governance Statement 2025/26**

The former Clerk reported that the Annual Governance Statement for the year 2025/26 could not be completed at this meeting as the necessary documentation was not yet available. The incoming Clerk advised that the statement primarily demonstrates that the Council has full processes and governance arrangements in place. Work will continue with the Internal Auditor and the statement will be brought to a future meeting.

**65.26 Internal Audit Report 2025/26**

The Clerk reported that the internal audit for 2025/26 is being conducted by the Internal Auditor, who has access to the Scribe accounting system. Cllr Almgill confirmed he had spoken with the Internal Auditor, who is content to proceed. The signed-off accounts for the years ending March 2024 and March 2025 are to be published on the Council website.

**ACTION:** Clerk to arrange publication of the signed-off accounts for the years ending March 2024 and March 2025 on the parish council website.

**66.26 Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2026**

The year-end accounts were presented. The bank reconciliation had been confirmed. The accounts are in order.

**RESOLVED:** That the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 be approved as an accurate reflection. **AGAR information in 67.26 below.**

## **67.26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26**

The Clerk reported that the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2026 must be submitted to the external auditor (Moore) by the end of June 2026. The incoming Clerk noted that parishioners may request sight of the accounts and the AGAR, and that the information will also be made available on the Council website.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council notes the requirement to submit the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2026 to Moore by the end of June 2026, and that the Clerk be authorised to take the necessary steps to meet this deadline as the accounts for the Year End have been resolved as accurate, and the provided AGAR as correct and agreed.

## **68.26 Insurance Review**

The former Clerk presented the insurance renewal report for 2026/27. The Council's insurance is brokered through Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance Brokers Limited (AJG) under their Community Schemes umbrella, with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited as the recommended underwriter. The proposed premium for the period 1 June 2026 to 31 May 2027 is £2,240.55 (inclusive of IPT and fees), representing a 2.0% increase on the previous year's premium of £2,196.88. The Clerk confirmed that the policy remains aligned with the Council's statutory obligations. It was also confirmed that the art trail pieces have been reviewed and are covered under the monuments section of the policy.

Proposed by Cllr Duthie; seconded. All members voted in favour; none against.

**RESOLVED:** That Ducklington Parish Council renews its annual insurance policy with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited (via Arthur J. Gallagher Brokers Limited) for the period 1 June 2026 to 31 May 2027 at a total cost of £2,240.55, and that the Clerk be authorised to make the necessary payment.

## **69.26 Planning**

### **(a) Application No: 26/00508/HHD – 21 Mill Meadow, Ducklington**

Proposal: Erection of single storey side extension to garage, and associated works.

Applicant: Mr Gavin Shephard. Town and Country Planning Act.

The application was considered. The Council raised no objections.

**RESOLVED:** That no objection be raised to planning application 26/00508/HHD.

**(b) Application No: 26/00750/HHD – Oxlease Barn, Course Hill Lane, Ducklington**

Proposal: Erection of single storey extension and conversion of existing garage to create extra living space; construction of an oak framed carport and new vehicle access gateway; replacement of existing rooflights; installation of an additional rooflight to east elevation; a dormer window to west elevation; and solar PV panels to south and west elevations.

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Scott. Town and Country Planning Act.

The application was considered. The Council raised no objections.

**RESOLVED:** That no objection be raised to planning application 26/00750/HHD.

**(c) Application No: 24/02878/RES – Land East of Witney Road, Ducklington (The Moors)**

Proposal: Reserved Matters application for Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale together with associated works for 105 dwellings. Applicant: Mr John Brooks. Town and Country Planning Act.

Cllr Barker declared a personal interest (his property is situated opposite the application site) and withdrew from voting on this item.

The Council discussed the history of the application. The Inspector's decision (22/00010/APPEAL) gave Ainscough Strategic Land two years from 9 January 2023 to submit the reserved matters application. Although some documentation was submitted on 8 November 2024, an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment has not been provided. The Environment Agency has issued two letters of objection. The application has been in progress for approximately five years, and there is evidence that planning uncertainty is adversely affecting local property values. A draft motion had been tabled requesting that the Council write to the Planning Officer requesting that application 24/02878/RES be submitted to the Lowlands Sub-Committee for consideration at the earliest opportunity, with a recommendation for refusal.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Lishman should first contact the Planning Officer (James Nelson) to ascertain West Oxfordshire District Council's current position before any formal correspondence is issued. The incoming Clerk offered to follow up if no response is received.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr Lishman contact the Planning Officer to ascertain WODC's current position on application 24/02878/RES prior to any formal correspondence being issued by the Council; and that the Clerk follow up with the Planning Officer if no response is received within a reasonable period.

**ACTION:** Cllr Lishman to contact James Nelson (Planning Officer, WODC) regarding application 24/02878/RES.

#### **(d) Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr Lishman reported that Community First have produced a draft of the emerging neighbourhood plan policies. He has a meeting with Community First scheduled for 20 May 2026 to review the draft. A community engagement event is planned for July 2026; the date will be confirmed.

The incoming Clerk advised that an application to designate the village pub as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) under the Localism Act 2011 should be submitted promptly, before forthcoming legislative changes take effect, as acting earlier may afford greater standing. The nomination form was confirmed as being relatively straightforward. The Council agreed to proceed.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council proceed with submitting a nomination for the village pub as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011 as a matter of priority.

**ACTION:** Cllr Lishman to review neighbourhood plan draft policies with Community First on 20 May 2026 and report back.

**ACTION:** Cllr Lishman to confirm date for community engagement event in July 2026.

**ACTION:** Clerk to complete and submit the ACV nomination form for the village pub.

### **70.26 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings and Standing Items**

#### **a) Hotel – The Old Four Pillars**

Cllr Barker reported that The Old Four Pillars Hotel is expected to close by the end of May 2026. Cllr Varnom subsequently confirmed that the final 57 residents and all staff are due to leave the hotel on 27 May 2026. The Council noted the position and agreed that this item need not feature on future agendas, with English teaching support to continue in Witney independently.

#### **b) Social Media – Comment Management**

The Council discussed the management of social media posts, particularly in relation to factual announcements on which comments are disabled. The incoming Clerk confirmed that this is an increasingly common approach for parish councils and advised that when factual posts are made with comments disabled, a brief explanatory statement should be included to prevent any suggestion that the Council is suppressing public engagement.

**RESOLVED:** That when posting factual statements on social media with comments disabled, the Council include a brief explanatory disclaimer. The incoming Clerk to provide a suitable template.

**ACTION:** Incoming Clerk to provide a two-sentence social media disclaimer template for use when comments are disabled on factual posts.

**c) CCTV Camera – D5 and Listed Building Consent**

Nothing to report.

**d) Village Newsletter**

The Clerk reminded members that articles for the June/July newsletter (Issue 238) must be submitted to Emma Buckard at [newsletter@ducklingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@ducklingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk) by 15 May 2026. The Council discussed options for printing. Given the imminent deadline and the absence of a Council credit card, the Chairman offered to pay the current printing costs personally and reclaim from the Council as an expense.

**e) Art Trail — Leaflet and Website**

Cllr George presented a triple-fold leaflet design and website page produced by Jenny Greenway. As these had only been finalised the previous day, formal approval was deferred to allow time for a proper review. Cllr Varnom was suggested to proofread the leaflet and website content. A QR code will be added to the leaflet. The art trail launch is targeted for July 2026.

Approval of Jenny Greenway's estimated design fee of approximately £200 (together with printing costs) is deferred to the next meeting. Jenny Greenway's existing monthly website maintenance invoice of £90 is to be paid at the end of the week.

**ACTION:** Cllr Varnom to proofread the art trail leaflet and website; comments to be returned to Cllr George.

**ACTION:** Projects Committee to convene to formally approve expenditure and confirm July 2026 launch.

**ACTION:** Clerk to arrange payment of Jenny Greenway's website maintenance invoice (£90) at the end of the week.

**f) Nature Plan and Village Pond**

Cllr George confirmed that the Council has a table at the Big Lunch Live event on 7 June 2026 and will be promoting information on garden ponds, the hedgehog highway, and holding a plant sale. Wild Oxfordshire is to be contacted for a site visit and recommendations on the pond before any dredging is undertaken. Dredging is expected to be scheduled for the drier months of July to September 2026. GS (GDPR Redaction) is the relevant contact for planning aspects.

**ACTION:** Cllr George to contact Wild Oxfordshire for a pond site visit and recommendations prior to any dredging.

### **g) Village Events Committee**

Big Lunch Live (7 June 2026, Church Street) - Road closure application W/26/00376/ROACLO has been submitted and is awaiting approval. Cllr Barker confirmed he has been in contact with PPL PRS in relation to the live acts, and that a Temporary Events Notice licence is to be obtained. The Bell has confirmed it will cover most of the associated costs.

The following payments from the village events calendar profits were confirmed and are to be recorded in Scribe under the appropriate reserve headings:

- Warm Welcome Space: £88.38
- FODS (Friends of Ducklington School): £88.38
- Over Sixties Lunch Club: £88.38
- Wild Ducks: £88.38 (held; not yet spent)

The sum of £163.00 received from the Big Lunch has been transferred into the ring-fenced village trust reserves. The balance prior to this transfer stood at £1,636.91; the updated ring-fenced village reserve balance is therefore £1,799.91. This transfer and balance are to be recorded in Scribe.

### **h) EV Microhub - Letter of Intent**

Cllr George presented a non-contractual letter of intent for the EV microhub project. An email received from the EV provider on 11 May 2026 had proposed siting the hub near the disabled bay or school barrier. This is not the Council's preferred location; the Council's preference is near the sports club car park, which is also closer to the transformer and power supply. Cllr George is to respond to the provider requesting a site visit before the location is finalised.

Proposed by Cllr George; seconded by Cllr Barker. All members voted in favour; none against.

**RESOLVED:** That Ducklington Parish Council formally supports the progression of the EV Microhub financing, approves the signing of the letter of intent, and authorises the Chair and Clerk to execute the document on behalf of the Council.

**ACTION:** Clerk to sign and forward the letter of intent to Cllr George.

**ACTION:** Cllr George to arrange a site visit with the EV provider to agree the preferred location for the microhub.

### **i) Annual Parish Meeting**

The Annual Parish Meeting is confirmed for Thursday 28 May 2026 at 7.00 pm in the Main Hall of the Village Hall. As this falls before the next newsletter print date, the meeting will be publicised via the parish council website and by post.

### **j) Unity Trust Bank Purchase Card Application**

The Clerk confirmed that the purchase card application forms are prepared and ready to be processed with the incoming Clerk.

**ACTION:** Clerk and Chairman to progress the Unity Trust Bank Purchase Card application with the incoming Clerk.

### **k) Grass Cutting Contract**

The Clerk noted that three competitive quotes are required before any grass cutting contractor can be formally appointed for the current cycle. The existing contractor (Darren) has already completed two to three cuts whilst the procurement process is being arranged.

The incoming Clerk offered to provide contractors. A submission deadline must be included in the tender request.

**RESOLVED:** That three competitive quotes be obtained for the grass cutting contract; quotes to be circulated to all members in advance of the next meeting.

**ACTION:** Clerk to circulate the grass cutting specification and obtain three quotes; incoming Clerk to provide suggested contractor contacts.

### **l) Sycamore Tree at Peel Close**

The Clerk reported that the owners of the Peel Close property had been in contact confirming that a planning application has been made in relation to the tree. The tree had been missed from the last two tree survey rotations. Tree surveys are conducted on a three-year cycle; the next survey is due approximately 2027, which remains within the cycle required for insurance compliance.

### **m) Annual Risk Assessment, Internal Controls, External Asset Inspection and Investment Policy Review**

**RESOLVED:** That the Council notes the completion of the Annual Risk Assessment, Annual Review of Internal Controls, Annual Inspection of External Assets, and Annual Investment Policy Review, all as confirmed in the minutes of two months ago.

### **n) Financially Supported Bus Services**

Cllr Lishman reported that he has been engaged with the bus service review. The re-tendering of bus services is due to go live in August 2026. A meeting was scheduled at the Corn Exchange, Witney, on Tuesday 19 May 2026. Cllr Lishman will continue to represent the parish's interests and monitor the situation.

## **71.26 New Business**

### **a) Noticeboard in Bus Shelter**

Cllr Varnom raised the condition of the bus shelter noticeboard. The Council agreed that quotes should be obtained for replacement noticeboards at the bus shelter and the cemetery.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerk obtain quotes for replacement noticeboards at the bus shelter and the cemetery, for consideration at a future meeting.

### **b) Little Library**

The Council considered the proposed Little Library project. RC (GDPR REDACTION) has expressed interest in proceeding, and the Witney Men's Shed group could build the structure. A potential location outside the school gate was discussed, with the possibility of a Council contribution towards costs. Concern was raised about the durability of standard timber in exposed conditions; a more robust material or a sheltered location (such as within the bus shelter) was suggested. Installation is expected in autumn 2026.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council in principle supports the Little Library project and agrees to contribute towards costs; the Clerk to clarify the proposed location, materials, and estimated cost with RC and report back to the Council.

### **c) Mickleton Against Inappropriate Development (MAID)**

The Council considered the MAID petition requesting support for a campaign against inappropriate development in a neighbouring area. Following discussion, the Council resolved to take no action, noting that it is not appropriate to comment on matters outside the parish boundary.

**RESOLVED:** That no action be taken on the MAID petition at this time.

### **d) Cottsway Community Fund 2026–27**

The Council noted the availability of the Cottsway Community Fund 2026–27. Cllr George confirmed she has already circulated details to local groups who may qualify. The matter was noted.

### **e) OCC Community Transport Grants 2026–27**

The Council noted the OCC Community Transport Grants scheme (deadline 10 July 2026). Following discussion, the Council resolved that no application would be submitted on this occasion. The scheme is noted for future reference.

**RESOLVED:** That no application be submitted by the Council under the OCC Community Transport Grants 2026–27 scheme on this occasion.

#### **f) Speed Indicator Device (SID) on A415 - Battery Replacement**

The Council considered a quote from Darren for annual SID battery replacement on the A415, at a cost of £240 per annum (approximately three changes per month, depending on usage). All members voted in favour; none against.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council approves Darren's quote of £240 per annum for SID battery replacement on the A415, and that the Clerk arranges payment accordingly.

## **72.26 Playgrounds, Cemetery, Litter, Open Spaces, Sports Pavilion, Sports Field and Allotments**

### **a) Playgrounds - Inspection Report**

The Clerk reported on playground inspections. The current inspector is Craig Warner (vendor). Plausible concerns were raised about the recent reliability of inspection reporting. The Council may approach an additional inspector as an alternative if issues persist. It was noted that a solar farm community payment is expected to be received and may contribute towards future playground equipment replacement.

**ACTION:** One councillor to take dated photographic evidence of playground equipment on a weekly basis, retaining images with date/time stamp for insurance purposes in the interim of an absent inspector.

**ACTION:** Parish Council to establish whether inspector is available and willing to resume playground inspections.

### **b) Chalcroft Play Area - Safety Concerns**

The Council noted that the slide at Chalcroft Play Area presents an immediate safety risk, including rust traps, finger traps, and deteriorating surfacing. Immediate action was agreed as follows:

**RESOLVED:** That (a) red and white hazard tape be applied immediately around the dangerous slide to restrict access; (b) three competitive quotes be obtained for removal of the slide; and (c) a public statement (with comments disabled) be posted on the community group to notify residents of the closure.

### **c) BBQs on Parish Land**

Cllr Barker reported that BBQs had been observed on parish land at Chalcroft. Following discussion, it was agreed that no-BBQ signage should be considered as part of a wider

general review of village signage. A BBQ risk assessment is to be incorporated into the Council's risk assessment.

**RESOLVED:** That the matter be broadened to a general review of village signage; and that a BBQ risk assessment be incorporated into the Council's risk assessment document.

#### **d) Cemetery Management**

The Clerk reported on cemetery management matters. Cemetery plot reservations are to be managed via the Scribe system, and appropriate signage for the cemetery is to be obtained.

**ACTION:** Clerk to ensure cemetery reservations are managed through Scribe and to source appropriate cemetery signage.

#### **e) Litter Picker's Report**

The litter picker's report was noted. The litter picker had found a wallet in a hedge.

#### **f) Village and School Car Park - Drainage Issues**

The Clerk reported that G. Hill & Sons had been unwell, which had delayed progress. Drainage works at car park are being attended to. The school car park drainage works are to be progressed once G. Hill & Sons are available; the issue is not critical in the short term but must be resolved before the winter.

**ACTION:** Clerk to contact G. Hill & Sons to confirm a date for the school car park drainage works.

#### **g) Sports Pavilion - Changing Room and Toilet Project**

The Clerk reported on the meeting held approximately one month previously, attended by Cllr George, Cllr Dunsdon, Cllr Duthie, and representatives of the Sports Club.

Approximately £26,000 of S106 funding is available for the changing room and toilet refurbishment; three quotes have been obtained and the total cost of required works exceeds the available S106 funding by approximately £12,000. FCC grant details have been forwarded to the Sports Club (E., and DM - GDPR). A payment of £3,700 has already been made; all works must be completed before the start of the football season. The Clerk confirmed that the Council cannot reclaim VAT on behalf of the Sports Club.

**RESOLVED:** That (a) FCC grant details be forwarded to the Sports Club to pursue; (b) the possibility of a Council loan to the Sports Club of up to £12,000 be investigated and reported back, subject to confirmation of the Council's legal powers; and (c) all project works be completed before the start of the football season.

#### **h) Allotments - Renewal of Tenancy Agreements**

The former Clerk reported that the allotment rent has been paid to Oxfordshire County Council and tenancy renewals have been completed. Three allotment plots remain vacant and are reported to be in an untidy condition; three prospective tenants are to be contacted to confirm their ongoing interest.

**ACTION:** Clerk to provide contact details to Cllr Dunsdon, the three prospective allotment tenants to confirm interest and arrange tenancy agreements via Cllr.

#### **i) Allotments - General**

Cllr Dunsdon reported no further updates.

### **73.26 Finance**

#### **a) Account Balances, Bank Reconciliation and Debtors**

The bank reconciliation was presented and accepted. Account balances were confirmed as per the Briefing Pack. Regular debtor payments were noted.

**RESOLVED:** That the bank reconciliation as presented be approved.

#### **b) Investment Policy - Monthly Savings Transfer**

The Council confirmed adoption of a monthly savings transfer approach, replacing the previous approach of frequent ad hoc transfers, in accordance with the Annual Investment Policy Review.

#### **c) Invoices for Payment**

The following payments were approved in addition to those listed in the Payments Schedule in the Briefing Pack:

- Road closure application fee (retrospective) - approved. Proposed by Cllr Lishman, seconded by Cllr Dunsdon.
- Water board charges - approved (paid as invoices are received).
- Oxfordshire County Council rent - approved.
- Jenny's website maintenance invoice (£90) — to be paid at the end of the week.
- SID battery replacement (Darren, £240 per annum) - approved (as per item 71.26(f)).

**RESOLVED:** That all payments as listed in the Briefing Pack Payments Schedule, together with the additional payments noted above, be approved.

## **74.26 Other Comments and Matters for the Next Agenda**

### **a) Register of Members' Interests and Declarations of Acceptance**

The incoming Clerk confirmed that the register of members' interests to be submitted within 28 days. The incoming Clerk will upload the register to the Council website once completed by all members. Any outstanding forms will be followed up.

**ACTION:** Incoming Clerk to upload the register of members' interests to the Council website upon completion.

### **b) MUGA Signage**

Cllr George noted that a new sign has been installed on the MUGA board. During daylight hours the MUGA is currently in use by the netball team only. Noted.

### **c) Outgoing Clerk - Chromebook**

The Council considered the disposal of the Chromebook currently used by the outgoing Clerk (Steve Smith). The device is approximately five years old and its depreciated value is considered minimal-to-nil (clerk note; standard valuation depreciated to nil, removed from asset register). The Council resolved to gift the device to Steve Smith following a remote wipe and data recovery assessment. A new laptop is to be purchased for the Council.

**RESOLVED:** That (a) the Chromebook be gifted to Steve Smith following a full remote wipe and personal data recovery assessment; and (b) a new laptop be purchased for the Council's use. The estimated depreciated value is to be recorded in the minutes, and removed from asset register.

**ACTION:** Incoming Clerk/Cllrs to arrange a remote wipe and data assessment of the Chromebook; estimated depreciated value to be recorded.

**ACTION:** Clerk to arrange purchase of a new laptop for the Council.

### **d) Email Access - Outgoing Clerk**

**RESOLVED:** That email access for Steve Smith be revoked with immediate effect following this meeting as per government guidelines.

### **e) Farewell Gesture - Richard (former Councillor)**

Cllr George raised the matter of a farewell gesture for Richard, who had served the Council for approximately 15 years. A tribute to Richard is to be included in the next newsletter issue (not the current issue, due to the imminent 15 May 2026 deadline).

**RESOLVED:** That theatre tickets (to the value of approximately £100) and a card be arranged for Richard, funded personally by council members, as a gesture of thanks for his long service.

**f) Thames Water Connection**

Cllr Barker noted that no response had been received from Thames Water regarding the connection to the garden. The Council continues to rely on the generosity of neighbouring residents in the interim. The Clerk is to chase Thames Water for a response.

**ACTION:** Clerk to chase Thames Water for a response regarding the water connection.

**g) New Village Defibrillator**

Cllr Varnom requested that a new village defibrillator be added as an item on the next agenda. The Council noted the request.

**h) Vote of Thanks**

A formal note of thanks to Steve Smith for his considerable contribution as Clerk over the years was recorded in the minutes, and the Council wishes him well.

A note of thanks was also recorded for Thom Rhodes for stepping into the role of incoming Clerk and providing guidance moving forward.

**75.26 Date of Next Meeting (APM and PCM).**

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Thursday 28 May 2026 at 7.00 pm in the Main Hall of Ducklington Village Hall. The next Parish Council meeting will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2026, at 19:30 in the Lilac meeting room of the Village Hall.

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The meeting closed at 21:39.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairman)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_