

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF DUCKLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 2nd September 2026 at 7.30 pm in the Lilac Room, The Village Hall

Thom Rhodes, Clerk and Proper Officer

DRAFT MINUTES**1. Members Present:**

Cllr. David Duthie (Chair)	Cllr. Jo George	Cllr. John Dunsdon
Cllr. Angela Dowley	Cllr. Paul Lishman	Cllr. Sarah Varnom
Cllr. John Smyth	Cllr. Liam Mackenzie	(West Oxfordshire District)

2. Also in Attendance:

Thom Rhodes (Clerk and RFO)

3. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Matthew Barker (Vice-Chair) and Cllr. Thomas Ashby (Oxfordshire County).

Cllr. Peter Almgill was not present and no apologies had been received in advance of the meeting; he subsequently advised by email that he had been detained at another meeting and could not get in touch (noted and accepted by the Clerk).

4. Public Participation

Standing Orders were suspended for a period of up to 20 minutes to allow members of the public to address the Council in relation to the business on the agenda, or to request matters to be discussed at a subsequent meeting. No members of the public were present.

108.26 Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Urgency Meeting of the Parish Council held on 5th August 2026 were proposed by Cllr. George and seconded by Cllr. Lishman, and were approved as a correct record.

Action: Clerk to include the draft Minutes of the previous meeting within the briefing pack in future.
(Clerk)

109.26 County and District Council Matters**County Councillor Report: Cllr. Thomas Ashby**

Cllr. Ashby was unable to attend and submitted a written report, which had been circulated and was noted. The report covered the following:

- Botley Road and Oxford traffic filters: the Botley Road will re-open on Sunday 20th September 2026 and the traffic filters will become operational on 28th September, serving the same areas as the congestion zone. Residents may apply for 25 free passes into the city centre; unlike the congestion zone, there is no longer an option to pay £5 to pass through.

- Electric blanket testing: a free testing session will be held in Witney on Thursday 8th October 2026, bookable through the County Council. Of 920 blankets tested last year, 338 failed safety assessment.
- Witney High Street: recent work has been to re-route underground utilities, after which attention turns to improvements on the opposite side of the High Street. Temporary bus stops remain in place, with further changes to come, and ANPR cameras will be installed as part of the works.
- A415 speed limit: the County Council is consulting town and parish councils on a 50 mph limit from the Ducklington roundabout to Cokethorpe and 40 mph between Cokethorpe and Standlake. Public consultation is expected to open later in September.
- Ducklington Sports and Social Club: Cllr. Ashby has offered £2,000 from his Councillor Priority Funding towards the refurbishment of the changing facilities (see item 113.1).

Members also noted the correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council of 17th August 2026 on the A40 Eynsham Park & Ride to Wolvercote scheme: enabling works from autumn 2026, main construction from spring 2027, the park and ride opening in early summer 2028 and the scheme completed by summer 2029.

District Councillor Report: Cllr. Liam Mackenzie

Cllr. Mackenzie presented his report. The principal matter is the Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043, now out for consultation until 9th October 2026 (see item 111.1). The Ducklington ward carries three strategic housing locations, each of approximately 700 homes: west of Colwell Green; south of Witney, between Ducklington and Curbridge; and north of Witney. There is nothing unexpected in the Plan.

An Infrastructure Delivery Plan has since been released but has not yet been circulated to the Council. On a first reading it does not show allocated funding for all of the infrastructure considered necessary, and each strategic site will be required to prepare its own infrastructure plan; Cllr. Mackenzie will give a fuller view once he has reviewed it.

Of particular concern is the proposal to connect approximately 5,000 new homes to the existing Witney Sewage Treatment Works. Thames Water has now confirmed the upgrade is complete and has increased capacity by 50 per cent. Members questioned that assurance, noting that discharges are reduced but not eliminated, that no works had been observed on site, and that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan appears to assume the utilities will deliver what is required. Cllr. Mackenzie confirmed the Plan retains a reference intended to prevent the housing between Ducklington and Curbridge from surrounding the treatment works.

Action: *Cllr. Mackenzie to check whether the Infrastructure Delivery Plan may be forwarded to the Council. (Cllr. Mackenzie)*

Wildflower Areas

Cllr. Mackenzie asked whether Ducklington has any wildflower areas, having received a number of complaints elsewhere from residents concerned that dried wildflowers increase fire risk in prolonged

hot weather. He is in discussion with the District Council's environment officers about whether estate management contracts can allow earlier cutting during dry spells.

Cllr. George reported three areas in the village: two at Bartholomew Close and one at the Triangle, off the cut-through from Witney Road. One of the Bartholomew Close areas has established well; the second has not taken, in part because of shade. The Triangle remains some way off owing to rubble/poor soil, and the false acacia there still requires treatment. The churchyard also has a wildflower area, which was cut early during a very dry period following a safety concern. Members agreed that early cutting in prolonged dry conditions is a sensible precaution, and that uncut roadside verges present a similar fire spread risk.

Solar Panels near Caswell House

The application returns to the planning committee for a further vote this month, understood to follow legal matters raised behind the scenes. The site lies west of Curbridge, but the panels would still connect to the Ducklington substation.

Street Works, Church Street

Cllr. George asked about the small holes noticed on Church Street following the last meeting. These are understood to have been inspection related, with a camera survey undertaken, and possibly BT works given their proximity to the BT boxes and the yellow cable markings. All have since been filled in.

110.26 Declaration of Interests

Cllr. John Smyth declared an interest in item 113.1 (DSC S106 Funding - Sports Club Refurbishment Works) as a trustee of Ducklington Sports Club. Cllr. Smyth provided factual information to members on the Club's funding position and took no part in the Council's decision on that item.

No other declarations of interest were made in respect of items on the agenda.

111.26 Planning

111.1 Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043: Regulation 19 Consultation

The consultation opened on 26th August 2026 and runs until 9th October 2026. As a Regulation 19 consultation, representations should address whether the Plan is legally compliant and sound.

Cllr. Lishman advised that nothing had changed substantially from the Regulation 18 version, and that the Council's response should reflect its earlier position rather than raise new points. The principal issue remains the proposed development south of Witney, between Ducklington and Curbridge. Members noted that the latest policy wording does reflect the Council's earlier comments that any such development should be self-contained rather than an extension of Ducklington, and that it is now referred to in the Plan as a village in its own right.

Members reaffirmed the Council's established position: it does not support the allocation, given the landscape constraints and the proximity to the sewage treatment works and the abattoir, but acknowledges that housing has to be provided somewhere, and wishes to work constructively with the developer if it proceeds.

On the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 contributions, members noted that the site currently lies within the Ducklington parish boundary, so CIL receipts should be apportioned to this Council where applicable.

Resolved: The Council agreed to submit a response to the Regulation 19 consultation reiterating its established position on the proposed development between Ducklington and Curbridge, to be drafted by Cllr. Lishman, circulated to members for comment and submitted in advance of the 9th October 2026 deadline.

Action: Cllr. Lishman to draft the Council's consultation response and circulate it to members for comment; the response to be submitted before 9th October 2026. Cllr. Lishman also to attend a forthcoming consultation event and report back. (Cllr. Lishman / Clerk)

111.2 Manor Farm, 1 Witney Road: planning consultation, for noting

Members reviewed the further consultation and noted that it concerns minor amendments only, including the replacement of a window with a pair of doors, which members considered a good addition. No objection was raised.

111.3 Land East of Witney Road (The Moors), 24/02878/RES: update

There has been no further movement since the last meeting, the most recent development being the expiry of the Environment Agency consultation. Members noted that the reserved matters application reaches the three-year mark in January 2027, and that if works have not commenced the permission would lapse and the developer would need to reapply.

112.26 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings and Standing Items

112.1 Art Trail: Launch, Sunday 20th September 2026

Arrangements are in hand for the launch at 2.00 pm on Sunday 20th September 2026. The leaflets have been received and will be delivered to the Cllr. George on Friday.

N.H. (GDPR) holds the maintenance budget of up to £400 per annum agreed in November 2025 and is proceeding with restoration work as the weather permits (see also item 115.3). Cllr. George will tidy the gravel around one of the artworks.

Cllr. Varnom reported that the village planters have been watered daily throughout the dry weather and will be tidied and replanted on Sunday 6th September ahead of the launch. The grass behind the artwork on Aston Road has been cut, and litter is more visible there once cut; additional litter picking is being undertaken.

A double gazebo will be provided, subject to wind conditions, and the A-frame boards will again be borrowed from the church and transported to the chapel on the day – of which the Members thank the church for their support. Members agreed that a risk assessment covering the gazebo, trips and falls and pedestrian flow should be prepared.

Action: Clerk to prepare a single-page risk assessment for the Art Trail covering the gazebo, trips and falls and pedestrian flow. Clerk to deliver leaflets to Cllr. George. Cllr. Lishman to confirm arrangements for borrowing the church A-frame boards and their transport on the day. (Clerk / Cllr. George / Cllr. Lishman)

112.2 Apple Pressing Event (11th October 2026): road closure and arrangements

The road closure application has been submitted and payment was being processed, the closure to be formally published once received.

The Clerk has prepared the risk assessment for the road closure, which may be folded into the wider event risk assessment. Members discussed Martyn's Law, which is not yet in force, operates on a tiered basis beginning at a capacity of 200 to 799 and is presently focused principally on indoor premises; the event is not expected to reach that threshold. Members nevertheless agreed that, the risk being present now, it is good practice to acknowledge Martyn's Law within the event risk assessment, noting the existing mitigations of a closed road and the placement of equipment.

Action: *Cllr. George to update the Apple Pressing risk assessment to acknowledge Martyn's Law; Clerk to provide photographs of the road closure signage if requested. (Cllr. George / Clerk)*

112.3 EV Microhubs

Clerk has pressed for the contractor to tarmac at least the first two bays at their own cost, and noted that depending on the extent of excavation this may prove more cost-effective for them than reinstatement. The project awaits Connected Kerb, who in turn await paperwork for a shorter electrical route than originally proposed. The Clerk is aiming for progress by the end of September and will circulate any updates by email.

The Chair suggested that if the contractor tarmacs the first bay, the Council might consider funding the remainder of that stretch. Surface water run off was noted as an item to be aware of if tarmacking.

Action: *Clerk to continue pressing for the tarmacking of the affected bays and to circulate an update by email; surface water and accessible parking at the microhub bays to be added to the Council's project list. (Clerk)*

112.4 Solar Farm Fund

The Clerk has chased the developer repeatedly without response, receiving out-of-office replies and nothing from the main office. He requires only the grid connection date, which triggers the 28-day period for payment. The Chair reported that the construction compound appears to have been cleared, suggesting connection may already have taken place. Cllr. Mackenzie offered to assist.

Action: *Clerk to forward the developer's contact details to Cllr. Mackenzie; Cllr. Mackenzie to assist in obtaining the grid connection date if no further answer has been provided. (Clerk / Cllr. Mackenzie)*

112.5 Village Newsletter

The Chair reported that the current editor is finding it increasingly difficult to give the newsletter the time it needs because of work commitments. She will continue until Christmas and will help to identify a successor. Members recorded their appreciation of the quality of her work, which has been warmly praised by readers. The next copy deadline is 11th September 2026.

The Chair also reported that the regular printer will be given the opportunity to quote for future printing on the same basis as other suppliers.

Action: Chair to consider a potential successor(s) as newsletter editor and to continue the dialogue with the Council's regular printer. Members to submit any content to the editor by 11th September 2026. (Chair / All Members)

112.6 Thames Water: Sensory Garden Connection

The Clerk spoke with Thames Water, who have accepted the layout previously discussed and promised an update within five days. The works may be carried out by Thames Water directly or, if considered too involved, through a contractor; the Clerk cannot progress the matter further until the position is confirmed.

The Clerk confirmed that a goodwill gesture in form of vouchers may properly be made to those who have supplied water to the Sensory Garden during the delay.

Action: Clerk to follow up Thames Water and report once the update is received. (Clerk)

113.26 New Business

113.1 DSC S106 Funding: Sports Club Refurbishment Works

The Chair reported a positive meeting with Ducklington Sports Club, West Oxfordshire District Council and the Clerk, with a further meeting arranged for Monday 7th September 2026 at the Sports Club. Members noted the Club's thanks for the previous grant of £3,000 towards refurbishment, the effect of which was described as transformative, and that the Club's existing debt to the Council will be settled with the final payment this month.

Three quotations have been obtained for the Phase 1 refurbishment of the changing, shower and toilet facilities: Townsend Brothers Ltd, £44,926.86 including VAT (revised 18th August 2026); Drew Warren Building Contractors Ltd, £46,062.00; and S Rees Construction Ltd, £48,264.00. The S106 funds earmarked for sport and recreation stand at approximately £27,347 and expire on 28th December 2028. After grants secured and the Club's own funds, the residual shortfall is in the region of £5,000. The Club has secured a further £1,000 against the £1,000 anticipated, giving £2,000 in hand (including £2,000 of Councillor Priority Funding offered by Cllr. Ashby), and confirmed that any grant received after drawdown would be repaid to the Council immediately.

Resolved: The Council resolved to make an interest-free loan of up to £5,000 to Ducklington Sports Club towards the Phase 1 refurbishment of the changing, shower and toilet facilities, on the following basis:

- (a) the loan is made under section 19(3)(a) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, being the provision of a loan to a voluntary organisation towards recreational facilities which the Council could itself provide;
- (b) the loan is in the interests of the parish and its inhabitants, the Sports Club providing recreational facilities used by the village, the existing facilities dating from the 1980s and no longer being fit for purpose, and the works supporting junior participation and enabling the introduction of women's teams;
- (c) the Council has considered alternative funding and is satisfied that the Club has pursued other funding routes extensively, the loan bridging only the residual shortfall;
- (d) the loan is interest free and repayable over three years;

- (e) the sum advanced is to be reduced pound for pound by any further grant funding secured before drawdown, and any grant received after drawdown is to be repaid to the Council immediately;
- (f) funds are to be drawn down when building work commences or when the RFO is satisfied with the accuracy of the timeline;
- (g) the loan is to be recorded in a written loan agreement setting out the amount, drawdown, repayment schedule and the position should the Club not repay or the works not proceed as planned;
- (h) the loan is subject to written confirmation from the Club that this assistance, together with any other public financial assistance received in the previous three years, remains below the £315,000 Minimal Financial Assistance threshold under the Subsidy Control Act 2022;
- (i) the loan is to be budgeted and accounted for as a loan (debtor) rather than as ordinary expenditure, so that it is properly disclosed for internal and external audit; and
- (j) the Council's consent as landlord, by way of a licence to alter under the lease, remains a legally separate matter from the loan. The Clerk is to prepare the licence to alter alongside the loan agreement, the two running in parallel rather than one following the other, so that both are ready for signature ahead of the commencement of works and neither holds up the Club's programme.

The resolution was carried unanimously by those members entitled to vote, Cllr. Smyth having declared an interest and taken no part in the decision.

Action: Clerk to prepare the written draft loan agreement and the licence to alter in parallel, and to obtain the subsidy control confirmation from the Club prior to drawdown, so that both documents are ready for signature ahead of the commencement of works; Clerk to report the Council's indicative solicitor and surveyor costs under the lease, and its position on the Financial Undertaking, following the meeting of 7th September 2026. (Clerk)

113.2 Ashes Spreading ("Strewing") Policy and Cemetery Fee Review

The Clerk presented the draft Strewing of Ashes Policy 2026 appended to the briefing pack. It is consistent with those of neighbouring burial authorities and with the approach the church would take, and can sit alongside the existing Cemetery Regulations, with a few points of wording to be tightened when those Regulations are next updated. Strewing may be carried out by a funeral director only, not by families themselves. If adopted, the policy can be implemented immediately and applied to the enquiries already received.

Resolved: The Strewing of Ashes Policy 2026 was adopted as drafted, with immediate effect. The resolution was carried unanimously.

Cemetery Fee Review

The Clerk advised that a review of cemetery fees is needed: a funeral director has commented that the Council's fees are now considered low, and the Council needs to monitor its remaining capacity, estimated at approximately 22 years, and account for ongoing maintenance so that the cemetery is not undersold. His proposed approach is to take a baseline from the Oxford Diocese for this area and

then compare against neighbouring burial grounds. Members were clear that fees should sit so that capacity is not exhausted prematurely.

The Clerk advised that councils are encountering increasing legal challenge where non-parish applicants are refused, and that the general position across parishes over the last decade is that eligibility should be based on locality or a demonstrable connection. Members agreed that applications will be considered individually if outside of the parish, that a genuine connection to the village will be required, and that such decisions should be taken at a meeting of the Council rather than by email.

Resolved: The review of cemetery burial fees will be brought to the Council in December 2026. Reservation forms issued in the meantime will be honoured at the fees currently in force.

Action: Clerk to bring forward the cemetery fee review in December 2026, benchmarked against the Oxford Diocese and neighbouring burial grounds, and to repackage and circulate the Cemetery Regulations, the fees and the Strewing of Ashes Policy to members and to the PCC. (Clerk)

113.3 Dog Fouling, Peel Close Common Ground

The Clerk reported that no further complaints have been received since the last meeting, and members confirmed that the area is noticeably tidier and that no further fouling has been observed. Members agreed that signage is not required at this stage and that the matter will continue to be monitored.

113.4 Village Pond: Tree Works (Pollarding and Dredging)

Cllr. Smyth met the contractor on site. Much of the vegetation is dead or in decline, including elms lost to disease, and the pond can no longer be seen from the surrounding area. The contractor (M.E.) estimated at least two days of work and provided a quotation, which members considered fair for the scope, but advised that work could not start before November. A broken wooden post at the pond was also reported and will need attention.

The Clerk advised that two further quotations should be sought; that these need not be from equally specialist contractors provided the work is carried out to the same standard; and that the Council is not obliged to accept the cheapest provided three have been obtained. THD Tree Care and D&S Garden Services were suggested.

Cllr. George considered that the pond also requires dredging so the waste can be dealt with at the same time; the Chair's view was that dredging is not required at this stage. It was agreed to discuss dredging at a later date.

Resolved: Approval of the pond tree works was deferred pending two further quotations, with a view to works commencing in November 2026. The quotation from M. Everett Tree & Garden Services has accordingly been removed from the September payments schedule at item 115.3 (for agenda and minutes continuity).

Action: Clerk to obtain two further quotations for the pond works ahead of a November start and to raise the question of dredging with the contractors; Chair and Clerk to discuss dredging with a local contractor. (Clerk / Chair)

113.5 2026/27 Pay Scales (NJC): formal approval

Resolved: The Council adopted the National Joint Council 2026/27 pay scales, an uplift of approximately 3 per cent, for the Clerk and RFO, to be applied retrospectively from 1st April 2026 together with the associated backpay. The resolution was carried unanimously.

Action: *Clerk to circulate the revised salary details to members by email and to implement the revised scale point and backpay in the next payroll, the September payments schedule to be updated accordingly. Clerk noted that he'll seek guidance before putting forth the payment, to ensure correct costings. (Clerk)*

113.6 Martyn's Law: Implications for Village Events

Discussed under item 112.2. Members noted that the legislation is not yet in force but agreed that acknowledging it within event risk assessments is good practice going forward.

113.7 Sensory Garden: Spring Bulbs Fund

Members discussed a budget for spring bulbs and bedding for the Sensory Garden and the village planters, noting that the existing Wild Ducks budget of £200 per annum is a separate provision. Spending to date has been modest, bulbs already in the planters will return, and the principal ongoing cost is summer bedding and year-round planting.

Resolved: An annual budget of £500 was approved, covering both the Sensory Garden and the village planters, this being in addition to the existing Wild Ducks budget of £200 per annum.

113.8 TENs Licence: Sale of Cider at Apple Pressing

The Village Events Committee wishes to sell cider, made from the previous year's apple pressing, at the event on 11th October 2026. The Clerk advised that a Temporary Event Notice is not required where drink is given away, but is required where any charge is made, including a donation, and that the fee is nominal at £21.

Resolved: The Council approved the application for a Temporary Event Notice, at a fee of £21, to permit the sale of cider at the Apple Pressing event on 11th October 2026.

Action: *Clerk to apply for and pay for the Temporary Event Notice. (Clerk)*

113.9 Village Christmas Tree: Budget and Sponsorship

Members noted that £200 was budgeted and spent last year, and that the sponsorship was gratefully received. It was agreed that the usual sponsor should be approached first, having supported the tree every year.

Resolved: A budget of £200 was approved for the village Christmas tree, and the Council will approach its usual sponsor for sponsorship towards it.

Action: *Chair to approach the usual sponsor regarding sponsorship of the village Christmas tree. (Chair)*

113.10 Clerk Projects: Playground Safety Web Tool; Planning Application Review Tool

The Clerk reported on two tools currently circulating among clerks. The first is a playground safety tool allowing equipment to be photographed and the images uploaded to a website, providing an

accessible record and demonstrating due diligence. Commercial pricing scales with precept and would be around £27 per month for this Council; the Clerk could build an equivalent for approximately £2.50 per month, accessible to all members, with photographs submitted by email.

Clerk advised that provided checks are routinely undertaken and recorded, an external monthly visit would not be needed: the general expectation is a recorded visual check by members, with a quarterly inspection by a certificated person. The SLCC, with RoSPA, will be holding playground inspection training at a reduced cost, which would qualify councillors to carry out formal checks. Cllr. Lishman supported trialling the tool but emphasised that it must complement rather than replace proper inspections, a point with which members agreed.

The second is a planning application review tool, for which there is no current equivalent. It would hold applications and the Council's comments in a single internal database, allowing the Council to recall its historic position on a site years later. The Clerk estimated approximately three weeks to build, with a running cost of £2.50 to £3.00 per month, self-contained and manageable by others in his absence.

Members supported the Clerk building and demonstrating both tools during September, on the understanding that the playground tool supplements rather than replaces proper inspections.

Action: Clerk to build and demonstrate the playground safety tool and the planning application review tool during September 2026, sharing progress as he goes. (Clerk)

114.26 Playgrounds / Cemetery / Litter / Open Spaces / Sports Pavilion / Sports Field / Allotments

Playgrounds

Two of the four vendors approached have now visited the park; full equipment quotations are still awaited. The Clerk is obtaining repair quotations for the loose A-frame poles at the top of the large swings at Glebelands.

Cemetery

See item 113.2 (Strewing Policy and Cemetery Fee Review).

Litter Picker's Report

The report was received after the agenda had been issued. Both litter pickers are doing well. I.M. has been litter picking alongside J. during the school holidays as part of her Duke of Edinburgh Award and has been reported as doing an excellent job; the Clerk confirmed that a letter of recommendation will be provided when required. Members also noted that litter is accumulating around the Aston Road planters, discarded from passing vehicles, and is being picked up regularly.

The Council recorded its warm and sincere thanks to Julie and to her husband for their continued efforts throughout the year, and to I.M. for volunteering her time. Members agreed that a small token of appreciation would be a fitting acknowledgement at the end of I.M.'s placement.

Open Spaces, Mill Meadow

The Clerk reported that no plan or record has been found showing that the open space at the bottom of Mill Meadow is owned by anyone, so by default it would be public open space. Cllr. Lishman noted

it would be helpful to resolve the position so the land can be properly defined as open space within the Neighbourhood Plan, as per the planning application.

Action: *Clerk to continue enquiries into the ownership and status of the open space at Mill Meadow. (Clerk)*

Sports Pavilion and Sports Field

See item 113.1. Members noted that the flower show had gone well and that the playing surface, which had struggled through the dry weather, has begun to recover following recent rain.

Allotments

Cllr. Dunsdon reported that all of the Council's allotments are now let. All holders have been asked not to light fires for the time being, given how dry the grass has been along the bank adjoining neighbouring land, and this has been very well observed.

Members noted the excellent standard of produce this year, including a holder who won all four classes entered at a show in Somerset and who will exhibit at Malvern in September. It was separately noted that a number of plots on the privately owned allotments in the village appear unused; for public awareness: these allotments are not managed by the Council.

115.26 Finance

115.1 Account Balances / Bank Reconciliation / Debts

The Clerk reported that the discrepancy previously identified in Scribe, which at one point showed the Council in negative equity of approximately £170,000, arose from duplicated entries and has been corrected with Scribe's assistance. Bank transfers recorded as payments are being re-entered as transfers, after which the reconciliation reports will be circulated to members and will match.

A full financial breakdown including YTD reconciliation will be provided before October, to be approved in October.

A new Unity online mandate system is expected during September, allowing mandate changes to be made online rather than by paper form; the Council's corporate purchasing card application has been accepted but is on hold until the mandate is updated, so that card access can be confirmed at the same time.

It was agreed that bank reconciliations and minutes will be *signed monthly* going forward.

Action: *Clerk to complete the Scribe corrections and circulate the reconciliation reports; monthly signing of bank reconciliations and minutes by the Chair to commence; Clerk to register the Council on the new Unity mandate system once available. (Clerk / Chair)*

115.2 AGAR 2025/26: Signed External Auditor Report, to note and publish

The signed External Auditor's Report and Certificate for the year ended 31st March 2026 has been received from Moore East Midlands. The Council is required under Regulation 13 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to publish the relevant documents, including on its website.

The Clerk reported that the internal audit report was well received. He noted that the auditor had raised a £1 differential, which is a rounding artefact arising from the requirement to round AGAR figures to the nearest pound and is not material. Members noted a general trend towards more exacting scrutiny, and that the external auditor is encouraging digital submission of the AGAR in future, although the statutory requirement for a physical signature would need to be resolved.

Action: Clerk to publish the signed External Auditor's Report and Certificate and the associated AGAR documents, including on the Council's website, in accordance with Regulation 13. (Clerk)

115.3 Invoices for Payment: Payments Schedule

The payments schedule circulated with the briefing pack was reviewed and approved, subject to the following amendments:

- the M. Everett Tree & Garden Services pond works were removed, the works not having been approved at item 113.4;
- the Clerk's September salary is to be confirmed following the adoption of the NJC 2026/27 pay scales at item 113.5, the revised figure to be circulated to members by email before payment; and
- an expense claim from Cllr. S. Varnom for plants for the village planters, in the sum of £23.50, was added.

Supplier	Description	Invoice No.	Date
D&S Garden Services	Posts, labour and bramble clearance	SI-1625	11/08/2026
D&S Garden Services	Backdated grass cutting and mowing large area	SI-1629	24/08/2026
Moore East Midlands	External audit 2025/26 (limited assurance review)	339949	26/08/2026
Jennifer Greenway	Website updates (documents, SEO, news and events)	1234	03/08/2026
Castle Water	Allotments water supply (current period, July 2026)	10011013427	10/08/2026
Cllr P. Lishman (Expense)	Newsletter printing (Mixam), reimbursement	INV-533765	23/07/2026
Thom Rhodes (Clerk, expense)	Chromebook (Google Pixelbook Go), reimbursement	PO39220213909	02/08/2026
SLCC	ILCA course fee (previously agreed)	SLCCILCATR26	On remittance
SLCC	FILCA course fee (previously agreed)	SLCCFILCATR26	On remittance
Cllr S. Varnom (Expense)	Plants for the village planters, reimbursement	Receipt	Sept 2026
Thom Rhodes	Clerk's salary (September 2026), per NJC scales adopted at item 113.5	Payslip	Sept 2026

It was further confirmed for the record that the artist undertaking the Art Trail maintenance holds prior approval, agreed in November 2025, for expenditure of up to £400 per annum on maintenance of the artwork, and that an invoice within that value is expected shortly and may be paid on receipt.

Resolved: The payments schedule was approved as amended above.

116.26 Other Comments / Matters for Next Agenda

Matters for the next agenda: cemetery fees; the defibrillator; and the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr. Dowley had nothing to raise.

Cllr. George reported that Wild Ducks will treat the false acacia at the Triangle next week. The stump killer has been purchased, its use delayed until conditions allowed as it cannot be applied in drought; an invoice will be submitted next month. Grass contractor has been asked not to strim that area until treatment is complete, after which it will be cut back at the end of the summer.

Cllr. Varnom had nothing to raise.

Cllr. Lishman will report on the Neighbourhood Plan at the meeting following the Art Trail.

The Chair raised parking on the double and single yellow lines at Standlake Road and the adjoining Fritillary Mews, which is becoming dangerous. Members noted that enforcement is a matter for the District Council rather than the police, and agreed that a notice should be posted on the village Facebook page and an item included in the newsletter, giving residents advance warning before enforcement is requested. Parking around the junction has been raised previously, and a traffic calming feature is proposed along that road as part of a future development.

Action: *Councillor(s) to post a notice on the village Facebook page and to include an item in the newsletter regarding parking on the yellow lines at Standlake Road and Fritillary Mews, and thereafter to contact West Oxfordshire District Council to request enforcement. (Councillors)*

(Cont'd)

117.26 Clerk's Comments / Reports

The Clerk reported that he has submitted an application for the village public house to be listed as an Asset of Community Value. The Clerk will bring the Asset of Community Value forms to the next meeting so that the application may be formally ratified by the Council.

Action: *Clerk to bring the Asset of Community Value forms to the October meeting for formal ratification by the Council. (Clerk)*

The Clerk also advised that, in anticipation of the next audit, Other Comments and Any Other Business will in future be minuted in more detail, broken down between comments from the public, items for the next agenda, and matters reported by the Clerk and RFO, so that attendance and participation are properly evidenced.

118.26 Closing Comments from Members of the Public

No members of the public were present.

119.26 Closing Comments from the Chair

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and contributions, and gave his apologies in advance for the October meeting.

120.26 Meeting Close Time

The meeting closed at 9.12 pm.

121.26 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Ducklington Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 7th October 2026. Cllr. David Duthie gave his apologies in advance for that meeting.

Signed: Date:

(Chair, Ducklington Parish Council)