DUCKLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER 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. Matthew Barker (Vice-Chair) Cllr. Paul Lishman
Cllr. John Smyth Cllr. Angela Dowley

2) **Also in Attendance:**

Thom Rhodes (Clerk and RFO)

3) **Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Jo George, Cllr. Sarah Varnom, Cllr. John Dunsdon and Cllr. Peter Almgill, and from Cllr. Liam Mackenzie (West Oxfordshire District) and Cllr. Thomas Ashby (Oxfordshire County).

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.

122.26 Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The draft Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 2 September 2026 (Version 7) were circulated with the briefing pack. The Clerk reported one correction to minute 113.1: the Sports Club's earlier grant is recorded as £3,700, correcting the £3,000 shown in the version first circulated, following a query received after circulation.

Resolved: The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2026 were approved as a correct record, including the correction to minute 113.1.

123.26 County and District Council Matters

County Councillor Report: Cllr. Thomas Ashby

Cllr. Ashby had sent his apologies and no written report had been received. Cllr. Mackenzie had advised that Cllr. Ashby intends to attend the West Oxfordshire District Council planning committee on Monday 12 October 2026 to give a local perspective on The Moors application (see below).

District Councillor Report: Cllr. Liam Mackenzie

Cllr. Mackenzie had sent his apologies, being on jury service, and submitted a written report, which was received on the day of the meeting. The key points were:

The Moors (24/02878/RES). The officer's report recommends refusal on three grounds: failure to demonstrate adequate prevention of flooding during the lifetime of the development; the development is poorly integrated and fails to respond positively to the established character of Ducklington; and insufficient information has been submitted on the arrangements for vehicular and pedestrian movements. Cllr. Mackenzie welcomed the recommendation, but is unable to attend the committee because of jury service (see below).

Local Plan 2043. The consultation remains open until 9 October 2026 (see item 125.1). Cllr. Mackenzie has met the land promoter for the site west of Witney and Peashell Farm, and shared images of the plans with his report. The '700 scheme' (Burford Road) includes plans for a primary school and employment sites.

Community Governance Review. The District Council will accept proposals from parish councils (see item 123.1). Cllr. Mackenzie suggested that the review could be an opportunity to look at Colwell Green's current attachment to Curbridge and Lew Parish.

National Scheme of Delegation for Planning. There are changes to how planning decisions are made from 31 October 2026, and Cllr. Mackenzie attached a short guide explaining them.

The report was noted. Cllr. Mackenzie remains available to members for any questions, particularly on The Moors.

Land East of Witney Road (The Moors), 24/02878/RES: Planning Committee, 12 October 2026

Members noted that the officers have recommended refusal of the reserved matters application, on the grounds set out in Cllr. Mackenzie's report. The application will be considered by the Lowlands Sub Committee at 2.00 pm on Monday 12 October 2026. Requests to speak must be registered with Democratic Services by noon on Friday 9 October, and each speaker is usually allowed three minutes.

Members agreed that the Council should register to speak and reiterate its long standing concerns. Cllr. Barker agreed to speak on the Council's behalf, making the following points: the District Council itself unanimously refused the application in 2021; the developers have been asked for satisfactory flood risk information four times and have failed to provide it on each occasion; the Environment Agency has objected four times; the site is an active floodplain, much of it within Flood Zones 3a and 3b; and the Council supports the officers' recommendation for refusal. Members noted the history of the outline permission (the Inspector's decision of January 2023, with reserved matters submitted in November 2024), and that the land is understood still to be in the original ownership.

Resolved: The Council agreed to register to speak at the Lowlands Sub Committee on 12 October 2026, with Cllr. Barker to speak on its behalf on the points above.

Action: *Clerk to register the Council's request to speak with Democratic Services that evening, ahead of the Friday noon deadline. Cllr. Barker to speak at the committee. Other members are welcome to attend. (Clerk / Cllr. Barker)*

123.1 Community Governance Review (West Oxfordshire District Council)

Members noted that the District Council is, at this stage, inviting parishes to state their views rather than setting out any proposals of its own, and that any parish wishing its boundary to remain unchanged must say so in writing, with reasons, by 31 December 2026.

Members agreed that the Parish has clear and defensible boundaries: the A40, with the River Windrush, forms a hard boundary between Ducklington and Witney. Members considered that the pressures behind the review relate chiefly to developments on the other side of Witney that fall within neighbouring parishes, and are less relevant to Ducklington. The Council is representative of its area, which comprises the village and outlying farms. The proposed Witney South allocation is envisaged as a standalone community rather than an extension of Witney. Members noted that, should that development be built out in the future, it could become a legitimate reason for a later boundary review, but that this would be premature now.

Members also revisited the idea of “Welcome to the Parish of Ducklington” signs at the main entry points to the village, which would help residents and visitors to recognise the Parish boundary.

Resolved: The Council agreed to submit a written representation that the Parish boundary should remain as it is, on the grounds above. Cllr. Lishman will draft the representation and send it to the Clerk, who will submit it before the deadline of 31 December 2026.

Action: *Cllr. Lishman to draft the representation and send it to the Clerk; Clerk to submit it to the District Council. Parish boundary signs to be considered at a future meeting. (Cllr. Lishman / Clerk)*

124.26 Declaration of Interests

Cllr. John Smyth declared an interest in item 127.1 (Ducklington Sports Club: Loan Agreement and Licence to Alter) as a trustee of Ducklington Sports Club, 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.

125.26 Planning

125.1 Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043: Regulation 19 Consultation

Members considered the draft response prepared by Cllr. Lishman, together with the comments made by the Chair. Cllr. Lishman asked whether the Council wished to continue actively objecting to the proposed development south of Witney, between Ducklington and Curbridge (the land behind Lidl), or to take a more neutral position and seek to work with the developer if it comes forward. Members noted that the Council had objected to the earlier live planning application, and had said in its response to the previous version of the Local Plan that it did not support the allocation, given its impact on the village.

Members noted that maintaining an objection would not affect any financial contributions to the Parish should the development proceed. On that basis, they preferred to maintain the Council’s position, for the sake of residents, while keeping the wording that, if the

development proceeds despite the Council's concerns, the Council wishes to play an active role in shaping it. The Chair asked that the wording be strengthened to make clear that the site lies within Ducklington Parish, not Witney, and that it should come forward, in line with the Plan, as a standalone new village distinct from Witney. Members also discussed the proposed railway station and car parking. Cllr. Lishman will check whether the point on best and most versatile agricultural land is relevant and, if so, add it.

Resolved: The Council agreed to maintain its objection to the proposed allocation, with the amendments above, and delegated the finalising of the response to Cllr. Lishman without further circulation. Cllr. Lishman will send the final response to the Clerk the following day, and the Clerk will submit it the same day, before the consultation closes on 9 October 2026.

Action: *Cllr. Lishman to finalise the response and send it to the Clerk; Clerk to submit it before 9 October 2026. (Cllr. Lishman / Clerk)*

125.2 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr. Lishman reported that the Neighbourhood Plan was displayed at the Art Trail event and has since been on display in the church. Attendance was modest, but the Plan has been up and accessible, and Cllr. Lishman will also attend the warm space to talk to residents. No comments were received during the three week period. Cllr. Lishman now proposes to send the draft Plan to West Oxfordshire District Council, which has offered an initial informal review; the draft remains confidential at this stage and will be open to public comment once formally submitted.

Land south of Witney. Cllr. Lishman reported that the District Council's head of planning did not know whether David Wilson Homes, the owner or developer, intends to bring forward a speculative application before the Local Plan is adopted, but had provided the developer's contact details. Members supported making informal contact, so that the Council knows the developer's intentions and can ensure it is part of the conversation; the Council is not opposed in principle to engagement, but wishes to have input. Members suggested inviting the developer to give a presentation to the Council if an application is imminent, and making the village's needs known, such as a new sports pavilion and an extension to the cemetery. In correspondence, the site should be referred to as land within Ducklington Parish, not as "South Witney".

Local Green Space. Cllr. Lishman explained that designation as Local Green Space gives strong protection, similar to Green Belt. The advice from Community First Oxfordshire is to focus on spaces that may be at risk. The sites under consideration are the Sports Club land at the end of the playing field, the allotments and the Chalcroft open space, all of which are understood to be owned by the Fielden Trust, together with The Moors should the development there fall away, when the whole of The Moors could be considered for designation. Members agreed that an open and honest conversation with the Fielden Trust is needed before any designation is proposed, so as to understand the Trust's long term intentions and to avoid jeopardising the cemetery extension discussions. Members noted that the revised flood zone already gives The Moors a degree of inherent protection.

Resolved: The Council agreed: (a) that the draft Neighbourhood Plan be sent to West Oxfordshire District Council for informal feedback; (b) that Cllr. Lishman contact David Wilson Homes informally about the land south of Witney within Ducklington Parish; and (c) that a meeting be sought with the Fielden Trust to discuss the proposed Local Green Space designations, the Trust's long term plans and the cemetery extension.

Action: *Cllr. Lishman to send the draft Plan to the District Council and to contact David Wilson Homes. Cllr. Lishman to request a meeting with the Fielden Trust, to be attended by the Chair, Cllr. Smyth and Cllr. Lishman, with the Clerk to attend. Cllr. Barker to pass the Trust's contact details to Cllr. Lishman. (Cllr. Lishman / Chair / Cllr. Smyth / Cllr. Barker / Clerk)*

126.26 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings and Standing Items

126.1 Asset of Community Value Application (village public house)

The Clerk reported that the preliminary application was not accepted because further information on the history of the public house was requested; this is treated procedurally as a rejection, but does not prevent the application from proceeding. The Clerk has requested that information. Because more than three months have passed since the Council first agreed to make the application, the Council's support needs to be ratified again; this gives a further three months for the application to be accepted. The Clerk expects acceptance in principle within about two months of resubmission. Members noted that the public house is the village's last remaining pub.

Resolved: The Council re-ratified its support for the application to list the village public house as an Asset of Community Value, and authorised the Clerk to resubmit the application once the additional information has been gathered.

Action: *Cllr. Lishman to send the Clerk the history of the public house from the Neighbourhood Plan baseline report; local residents with knowledge of the pub's history may also be approached. Clerk to recirculate the forms to members and to resubmit the application. (Cllr. Lishman / Clerk)*

126.2 Apple Pressing Event (Sunday 11 October 2026)

Cllr. Barker reported that all arrangements are in place. The certificate for the temporary road closure (Temporary Road Closure Order 16 of 2026, Church Street) has been received, and the organiser has laminated and posted the notices. The organiser's risk assessment and public liability insurance have been received, and Cllr. George is completing the Council's risk assessment. The Temporary Event Notice covers the sale of cider both in boxes and bags and from open containers. The event runs from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm, and the village calendars have been delivered and will be on sale. The Clerk has delivered letters to Church Street residents advising them of the closure. The arrangements were noted.

126.3 Art Trail

The Chair thanked everyone involved in the Art Trail launch on Sunday 20 September 2026, which was well received. Members noted that West Oxfordshire District Council had featured the Art Trail on its website, although some of the details were incorrect, and recorded their

thanks to R.B. for opening the trail. The £100 float for refreshments at the launch was not used, so no retrospective approval was required.

Action: *Clerk to circulate photographs of the launch to members. (Clerk)*

126.4 EV Microhubs

There is no update on the tarmacking of the bays. The Clerk has set up an automatic follow up to Connected Kerb every two months, matching the frequency of their updates, to keep pressing for an answer on the tarmacking. Two other clerks are now making tarmacking a requirement for their own schemes with Connected Kerb, and the Clerk will find out how they secured that commitment and use it to strengthen the Council's request.

126.5 Solar Farm Fund

The Clerk reported that the developer has now responded, with Cllr. Mackenzie copied in, and expects grid connection in Spring 2027; it will let the Council know if this is earlier. The Clerk has reminded the developer that the Solar Farm Fund payment is due within 28 days of connection, which the developer accepts. The developer will provide quarterly updates and has given an alternative contact. The Chair hopes the payment will be received by Spring 2027.

126.6 Village Newsletter

The Chair has approached a potential successor to the newsletter editor and expects an answer the following week. If that person declines, the Chair will ask whether they could help on a short term basis until someone is found. Cllr. Barker will approach a resident who expressed an interest when the current editor took on the role. The Clerk offered to identify local designers outside the Parish as a fallback, should no volunteer be found. Members noted that the role covers putting the whole newsletter together, not only its design.

Action: *Chair to report back at the November meeting; Cllr. Barker to approach the previous volunteer. (Chair / Cllr. Barker)*

126.7 Thames Water: Sensory Garden Connection (quotation DS2041700)

Members considered the Thames Water quotation of £6,933.00 including VAT, which they felt was a lot of money. The Clerk explained that the excavation and connection work is contestable, and that Thames Water price this work high because they do not currently have the capacity to carry it out; an accredited self-lay provider is likely to be considerably cheaper, possibly around a third of the price. Thames Water have confirmed that the route via the post nearest the road is acceptable, and that the site lies directly on the line of the main, so the design and the work required are minimal. If a self-lay provider is used, Thames Water would reduce their quotation to the elements they must carry out themselves. Any contractor would need a licence to work on the highway, and the Chair noted his concern about connecting to a four inch main. Cllr. Barker noted that the run from the grass verge to the post could be dug by hand if necessary, and would like the connection completed by May 2027.

Resolved: The Council agreed to seek alternative quotations from local groundworkers holding a street works licence, and from Townsend Brothers, before deciding how to proceed with the connection.

Action: *Clerk to send the specification and point of entry plan to the local groundworkers suggested by the Chair and request quotations that week. Chair to ask Townsend Brothers whether they would be interested. (Clerk / Chair)*

Cllr. Barker thanked the Clerk for the considerable work involved in progressing the connection.

126.8 Defibrillator

The Chair reported that the defibrillator cabinet is still empty and that no defibrillator has yet been purchased. A drawing is needed to support a planning application before the cabinet can be fixed to the wall, and the Chair will ask S. again whether he can prepare it. The question of first aid and defibrillator courses was not discussed.

Action: *Chair to follow up the drawing; Clerk to follow up as a reminder. (Chair / Clerk)*

127.26 New Business

127.1 Ducklington Sports Club: Loan Agreement and Licence to Alter

Cllr. Smyth declared an interest in this item (see item 124.26) and took no part in the decision.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for preparing the documents, and members commended the plain English summaries. In answer to a question, Cllr. Smyth confirmed that the Club currently has three active trustees. The Clerk explained that the documents name all of the leaseholders as individuals for the trust, and that both the documents and the lease can be amended if the trusteeship changes.

The Clerk advised that the drafts have been informally reviewed by two solicitors, one of them a property specialist. A formal review could be commissioned for a fee of up to £500, depending on scope, but would be likely to add only standard wording. The Clerk is satisfied that the documents are consistent with the existing lease, make no concessions, and are fair to both parties. The documents will be sent to the Club first and may then be shared with the District Council's Leisure Projects Officer; they cannot be shared with the officer first. The District Council officer will not act as a witness, as arranging this could take one to two months, so the Clerk will witness for the Council and the Club Treasurer for the Club. The Clerk confirmed that approving the documents in the form circulated records the Council's acceptance of them as they stand, and that the figures within them may change.

Resolved: The Council resolved to:

(a) approve the Loan Agreement in the form circulated;

(b) approve the Licence to Alter in the form circulated;

(c) authorise Cllr. Duthie and Cllr. Barker to sign both documents as deeds on the Council's behalf, with the Clerk to witness (the signatories may be changed by a later resolution if necessary); and

(d) note the S106 update set out in the briefing pack.

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 send the Loan Agreement, the Licence to Alter and the covering letter to the Club, and thereafter to share them with the District Council's Leisure Projects Officer. (Clerk)*

127.2 Allotments: Lease Renewal (Oxfordshire County Council) and National Allotment Survey

The Clerk explained that the Council has to renew the lease, but that the draft Heads of Terms as they stand would create considerable work for the Council. The landlord could give three months' notice, which is very little time to give notice to plotholders and clear the land; the alienation clause would not permit the Council to let plots; and wording suggesting that each annual payment counts as a renewal needs explanation. The Clerk is not certain that the draft reflects the lease the Council holds, and has raised about ten points with the County Council, including asking whether there is any renewed interest in the land following the mobile operator's earlier enquiry. Members noted that, on the current terms, only about two and a half years would remain of a term backdated to April 2022.

Members noted the points raised in the Clerk's initial comments of 25 September 2026. The Council awaits the County Council's reply, and the formal response will be brought back once it is received.

National Allotment Survey: the Clerk understands that Cllr. Dunsdon has submitted the survey, and has also sent his contact details to the National Allotment Society. Members thanked Cllr. Smyth for offering to take it on. Members also noted that all of the Council's allotments are let.

127.3 Cemetery: Exclusive Right of Burial Term, Cemetery Regulations and Burial Fees

The Chair introduced the Clerk's recommendations on the cemetery policies and fees. Members took each item in turn.

Strewing of Ashes. The Strewing of Ashes Policy, now incorporated into the amended Cemetery Regulations as regulations 53 to 63, was considered comprehensive and in line with the approach taken by other burial authorities. The Clerk noted that the SLCC is expected to offer a review of cemetery policies, and free cemetery insurance, as part of its membership package next year.

Exclusive Right of Burial. The Chair reported that, at an online OALC course, a speaker experienced in cemetery management had advocated a 25 year term, as there are ongoing costs in maintaining graves, including grass cutting and memorial safety testing. The Clerk explained that a right may be renewed at the point of interment, and that a 25 year term helps fund maintenance of the burial ground over the long term. Existing reservations,

including those made with the Diocese for which no term was stated, will be honoured on the terms on which they were granted, as will reservations already requested at the current fees. The Clerk estimates the remaining capacity of the cemetery at 22 to 26 years.

Burial Fees (Phase 1). The Clerk explained that the proposed fees bring the Council more into line with neighbouring authorities without overcharging the community, and help fund maintenance of the grounds; the previous fees were the Diocesan rates, which did not reflect the Council's own costs. The funeral director had advised that the Council's fees were low, and some neighbouring councils charge considerably more, Hailey Parish Council for example charging around £800 to £900 for an adult interment, doubled for non-residents. Members agreed that the fees should be reviewed annually, and asked to be told of any feedback received on the new fees.

Resolved: The Council resolved to:

(a) adopt the Strewing of Ashes provisions, as incorporated into the Cemetery Regulations;

(b) adopt an Exclusive Right of Burial term not exceeding 25 years for rights granted from 31 October 2026, with the Plot Reservation Form and Burial Application Form amended accordingly; rights already granted, and reservations already requested, to be honoured on their existing terms;

(c) adopt the amended Cemetery Regulations 2026, as set out in the Schedule of Amendments; and

(d) adopt the Burial Fees (Phase 1), to take effect from 31 October 2026, with the fees to be reviewed annually.

The Chair also asked members to consider future spending at the cemetery: reinstating the signboard that was previously removed; installing a water supply; and the repair of the stone wall. Memorial safety (topple) testing, which the church no longer carries out, is also required, with arrangements to be confirmed.

Action: *Clerk to publish the amended Regulations and fees from 31 October 2026, issue the amended forms, and raise invoices for the reservations agreed. The cemetery signboard, water supply, stone wall and memorial safety testing to be brought to a future agenda. (Clerk)*

127.4 Village Pond: Tree Works and Dredging

In line with Financial Regulation 5.9, the Clerk sought three estimates for the tree works. A written quotation was received from M. Everett Tree & Garden Services. Of the other contractors approached, one is no longer trading and the others would not provide a written quotation without charging for a site visit; they gave informal telephone guidance indicating costs materially higher than the M. Everett quotation. Competition was therefore sought rather than avoided, and the Clerk considers the M. Everett quotation to represent value for money. The Clerk has kept records of the contacts made.

Resolved: The Council resolved to appoint M. Everett Tree & Garden Services to carry out the tree works around the pond (pollarding the willows, crown raising the damson, felling the

dead and large elms, reducing the cornus and clearing fallen trees, with all waste removed) at £2,125.00 plus VAT (£2,550.00 including VAT), as quoted. The legal powers for this expenditure, recorded under Financial Regulation 5.2, are the Open Spaces Act 1906, sections 9 and 10, together with the Public Health Act 1936, section 260, for the dredging.

Dredging. The Clerk reported that the quarry (Smith's Bletchington) will dredge the pond again at no charge. The silt will need to be discharged onto the adjoining land behind the allotments, which requires the landowner's agreement. A start date will be agreed once that agreement is in place.

Action: *Clerk to instruct M. Everett Tree & Garden Services; Clerk to approach the adjoining landowner about the discharge of silt, and then agree a dredging start date with the quarry. (Clerk)*

127.5 Trees

(a) Church Street: replacement of the dead tree

The Chair reported that the tree on the small green on the right hand side of the cut through from the back of the pub to the square has almost entirely died, which M. Everett Tree & Garden Services have confirmed; the tree belongs to the Council. Now is the right time to fell it, but the ground conditions are not yet right for planting a replacement. The Clerk advised that online comparisons for similar work were higher, so further quotations were not considered necessary.

Resolved: The Council approved the felling of the dead tree by M. Everett Tree & Garden Services at £320.00 plus VAT. The replacement tree (a flowering crab apple, quoted at £375.00 plus VAT) will be brought back for decision at the November meeting.

Action: *Clerk to instruct the felling, and to bring the replacement tree quotation to the November meeting. (Clerk)*

(b) Tree survey

The last tree survey was carried out in December 2023. The former Clerk recommended moving from five yearly to three yearly surveys, which the Clerk supported, given how quickly trees affected by ash dieback can deteriorate. Cllr. Barker noted that the three new trees in the Sensory Garden will need to be added in future.

Resolved: The Council agreed to commission a new tree survey from Oxford Direct Services, to include the tree at Peel Close that was missed previously, and to ask Oxford Direct Services to look specifically at the hornbeam at item (c).

Action: *Clerk to instruct Oxford Direct Services. (Clerk)*

(c) Hornbeam at the Lovell Close and Peel Close cut through

The Clerk reported that the West Oxfordshire District Council Tree Officer requires a works application, which may still be refused unless supported by evidence. Members agreed that the new tree survey will provide the evidence needed to support any application to the Tree Officer, and that it is better to wait for the survey.

Resolved: The Council agreed to defer any works application for the hornbeam until the new tree survey has been received.

(d) Request to pollard a large tree at Chalcroft

Members noted that the tree is owned by the Council, is not subject to a Tree Preservation Order and is not near the overhead power lines; it was flagged for general maintenance in the last survey. Members agreed that the Council could cut it back as a neighbourly gesture, and that a quotation should be obtained in the meantime.

Action: *Clerk to ask M. Everett Tree & Garden Services for a quotation for pollarding the tree, including whether a discount would apply if the arisings were placed in the Council's dead hedge. (Clerk)*

127.6 Hedge Cutting: Bartholomew Close and the Sports Field

Resolved: The Council approved the autumn hedge cutting at Bartholomew Close and the Sports Field by Ivor Godfrey, at the estimated cost of £500.

Cllr. Smyth asked that the contractor contact the Sports Club (the Club Chair or Cllr. Smyth) before entering the field, as a pitch was badly damaged when the work was carried out in wet conditions in a previous year, and the Club has recently invested in the pitches nearest the hedge.

Action: *Clerk to contact Ivor Godfrey to arrange the work, and to ask him to liaise with the Sports Club before entering the field. (Clerk)*

127.7 Parking on the Standlake Road Verge near Mill Meadow

This item was deferred to the November meeting. The Chair noted that verge parking is mainly an issue on busy match days, and suggested that the Sports Club might ask visiting teams not to park on the verge.

127.8 Marquee Hire

Cllr. Smyth confirmed that the Sports Club has no objection to the hire. The Clerk noted that the £25 hire charge is now small relative to the administration involved, and suggested that the Council review its charges for the use of its land, including deposits and the arrangements for non-residents. He also suggested that the Sports Club might administer such bookings on the Council's behalf, collecting the fee and any deposit. The Chair asked the Clerk to review the arrangements with fresh eyes.

No decision was taken on the hire fee for this booking, which remains subject to the Council's insurance requirements.

Action: *Clerk to review the hire and land use charges and booking arrangements, and to report back in December 2026. (Clerk)*

127.9 Dog Fouling: Peel Close Common Ground

Cllr. Barker reported that the grounds contractor again found about half a dozen piles of dog fouling on the same patch of ground. Members reported seeing dogs from a nearby property wandering unaccompanied on numerous occasions.

Resolved: The Council agreed that the Clerk should write a polite letter to the occupiers of the property concerned. The letter will explain that the Council has received complaints about dog fouling in the area, and that dogs have been seen loose on several occasions; that the Council is not suggesting their dogs are responsible, but asks that dogs are kept on a lead or indoors so that the owners are not blamed; and it will remind them of the fine for dog fouling.

Action: *Councillors to confirm the address; Clerk to draft and send the letter. (Councillors / Clerk)*

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

Playgrounds

The Clerk reported that the like for like replacement quotations had been obtained to give a guide to replacement costs, so that repair costs could be weighed against them. Several suppliers attended the sites, but most preferred to quote for replacement equipment rather than repairs; Infinity Playgrounds were the only supplier to quote for the repairs, and agreed that the items selected from the RoSPA reports are those which should be completed by the end of the year. As these are repairs to existing equipment, the requirement to obtain competitive prices need not apply (Financial Regulation 5.12(ii)); no other supplier was willing to quote, and these reasons are recorded in line with Financial Regulation 5.13.

The Clerk also reported that the gaps in the rubber tiles at Chalcroft have worsened since the hot weather, and that a contractor estimates around £600 to fill all of the gaps; a full replacement of the surfacing would cost around £7,000. Members agreed that, as replacement equipment is likely to be at least 12 months away, the tiles should be repaired now. Works to close gaps in the metalwork of one of the multi-use units, to meet current entrapment guidance (estimated at £5,000 to £6,000), were not progressed, as RoSPA did not score this as a risk. Infinity Playgrounds could not reproduce the clanging reported on the large swings A-frame, and the Clerk will check it again.

Resolved: The Council resolved unanimously to approve the repairs at items (a) to (d) of the Infinity Playgrounds quotation AF-26.161 (cableway, swing seats, replacement chains and shackles, and seesaw bearings), at a total of £4,835.40 excluding VAT (£5,802.48 including VAT), and the temporary repair of the rubber tiles at Chalcroft at item (e), estimated at around £600. The legal powers for this expenditure, recorded under Financial Regulation 5.2, are the Public Health Act 1875, section 164, and the Open Spaces Act 1906, sections 9 and 10.

The Clerk noted that this spending can be reflected in the Council's budget and precept planning, and the Chair hopes that the Solar Farm Fund will absorb future repair costs.

Action: *Clerk to instruct Infinity Playgrounds; Clerk to ask D&S Garden Services for a quotation for the rubber tile repair; Clerk to recheck the large swings A-frame. (Clerk)*

Cemetery

See item 127.3.

Litter Picker's Report

Members noted the report. Members agreed that the Clerk should write to the occupiers of the three renovated cottages on Church Street, welcoming them to the village and asking that their bins are stored off the highway and put out only on collection days. The Clerk advised that, as the area is a conservation area, enforcement is possible if a polite request is not effective. The Clerk has already contacted the waste collection service about bins being left in the road after collection, and the Chair will ask Cllr. Mackenzie, who lives nearby, if he can assist.

Action: *Clerk to draft the letter and circulate it to members before sending. Chair to ask Cllr. Mackenzie to assist. (Clerk / Chair)*

Open Spaces: Mill Meadow

The Clerk reported that he has reviewed every document he can find, including on the planning portals, and that there is nothing to suggest the open space at the bottom of Mill Meadow should not be open space, nor any record of its legal ownership. The available evidence suggests that the Council would be the body to maintain it. Members noted that the developer had presented the land as open space for the village, and that some neighbouring residents may regard it as theirs. Cllr. Lishman noted that the first question is whether the land is public open space, with its management secondary. Members agreed to pursue the matter, and that the Council would be happy to maintain the space if it is public open space.

Action: *Clerk to contact Deanfield, the developer, to confirm the status of the land. (Clerk)*

Sports Pavilion and Sports Field

See item 127.1. The Clerk reported that the car park lights by the play area and two of the Club's CCTV cameras failed at the same time. He has asked three electricians for quotations; one, who was already due at the Club, has not yet reported on the fault. The faults were still present at the last update. The Clerk will establish whether the fault is electrical or relates to the CCTV system, so that the correct contractor can be instructed.

Action: *Clerk to follow up the electrician and the Club. (Clerk)*

Allotments

See item 127.2. All of the Council's allotments are let.

129.26 Finance

129.1 Half Year Financial Statements to 30 September 2026

The Clerk and RFO presented the half year financial statements. The earlier Scribe discrepancy has been resolved with Scribe's assistance: all 2026 payments and receipts have been re-entered, the balances brought forward, and the accounts now reconcile fully for each month. A credit interest receipt at 31 March had not carried across between years in Scribe, and this has been corrected. Expenditure is closely in line with the budget, and the Clerk estimates that reserves will stand at around £10,000 to £12,000 at the year end, before the next precept; the final precept instalment for the year was received in September. A

small number of items, including the HMRC payments, will be moved to the correct budget categories ahead of the budget process. The Clerk will circulate a fuller explanation of the statements to members by email.

The Clerk reported that the Sports Club's historic debt to the Council has been repaid in full.

Resolved: The half year financial statements were noted, and the Council agreed that the Clerk should send the Sports Club written confirmation that its historic debt has been repaid in full.

Action: *Clerk to send the Sports Club written confirmation; Clerk to circulate a summary of the statements by email. (Clerk)*

129.2 Account Balances / Bank Reconciliation / Debts

The Clerk reported that the reconciliation papers are available to members in Google Drive. There are no known debts owed by or to the Council. Invoices for recent burials were initially sent by Scribe to an address that rejected them and have now been sent manually; a reminder will be sent to the memorial mason, and an invoice for a memorial bench is still to be raised.

The Clerk and the Chair will meet on Friday 9 October to complete the new Unity online mandate. Once this is in place, the Council's purchasing card application, already approved, can proceed, and members will receive their individual login details. Members will be able to view and authorise payments, but no individual will be able to make a payment alone.

Resolved: The financial breakdown and year to date reconciliation were approved, and the bank reconciliation was noted.

Action: *Clerk and Chair to complete the Unity mandate on 9 October; Clerk to raise the outstanding invoices and send the reminder. (Clerk / Chair)*

129.3 Payments Made Under Delegated Authority

The payments and commitments made under delegated authority since the last meeting, as set out in the briefing pack, were noted. Members noted that the fence repair at the Sports Club car park entrance was completed for £40 less than quoted.

129.4 Invoices for Payment: Payments Schedule

The Clerk reported that HMRC has issued a letter indicating a possible penalty of around £100 relating to a PAYE filing, which he believes should not apply and is querying. If it proves to be legitimate, he will pay it immediately, as a statutory payment to HMRC, and report it to the Council for ratification.

The payments schedule circulated with the briefing pack was reviewed and approved, subject to the following amendment: the M. Everett Tree & Garden Services Church Street line is approved for the felling only (£320.00 plus VAT), the replacement tree having been deferred at item 127.5(a). The pond tree works and the hedge cutting were approved at items 127.4 and 127.6 respectively.

Supplier	Description	Invoice No.	Date

D&S Garden Services	Fence repair by Sports Club	SI-1676	21/09/2026
D&S Garden Services	Mowing and strimming large grass areas (18 September and 2 October)	SI-1709	02/10/2026
D&S Garden Services	Cutting and strimming of graveyard (11 and 25 September)	SI-1710	02/10/2026
D&S Garden Services	Mowing and strimming large grass area (3 September)	SI-1711	02/10/2026
Complete Weed Control	Weed control: second street spray of 2026 contract (September)	HC4928	27/09/2026
Starboard Systems Ltd (Scribe)	Cemetery and allotments monthly subscription	INV-22844	01/10/2026
Jennifer Greenway	Website updates (news and events, agenda and minutes, Neighbourhood Plan page)	1242	24/09/2026
Cllr M. Barker (Expense)	Card payment terminals (Village Events Fund): reimbursement	Screwfix order A28246542863	10/09/2026
Cllr M. Barker (Expense)	Sensory Garden plants and bulbs: reimbursement	Receipts	22/07/2026 and 15/09/2026
Thom Rhodes (Clerk, expense)	Temporary Event Notice fee, Apple Pressing: reimbursement	Receipt	Sept 2026
Thom Rhodes	Clerk's salary (October 2026)	Payslip	Oct 2026
HMRC	PAYE and National Insurance (Clerk)	HMRC liability	Oct 2026
M. Everett Tree & Garden Services	Church Street: fell dead tree only (approved at item 127.5(a); replacement tree deferred)	Quote	Sept 2026
M. Everett Tree & Garden Services	Pond tree works (pollarding, felling and clearance): approved at item 127.4	Quote	Aug 2026
Ivor Godfrey	Hedge cutting, Bartholomew Close and Sports Field: approved at item 127.6	Estimate	Oct 2026

Resolved: The payments schedule was approved as amended above.

130.26 Other Comments / Matters for Next Agenda

Cllr. Barker is chasing the supplier of the village Christmas tree and will report back at the next meeting on its cost and delivery date. Cllr. Dowley had nothing to raise.

Matters for the next agenda: the village Christmas tree; the Church Street replacement tree (item 127.5(a)); parking on the Standlake Road verge (item 127.7, carried forward); and the quotation for pollarding the tree at Chalcroft (item 127.5(d)).

131.26 Clerk's Comments / Reports

The Clerk apologised again for the late circulation of the briefing pack.

The Clerk reported that he has photographed the Neighbourhood Plan display in the church as a record that it was available, and delivered letters to Church Street residents about the road closure for the Apple Pressing. He also visited the cemetery, where the bins on the left hand side did not appear to have been emptied, and he will check the arrangements. He has photographed the dry stone wall inside and out as part of its annual monitoring.

The Clerk is moving the Council's files into a new shared Google Drive, so that all members will be able to find documents, such as the letterhead and invoices, without needing to ask.

Clerk's training hours (ILCA): members noted that the Clerk has completed 11 hours of learning towards the ILCA qualification, three of which fell outside his contracted weekly hours.

Resolved: The Council agreed that the additional three hours of training be paid, in line with OALC guidance.

132.26 Closing Comments from Members of the Public

No members of the public were present.

133.26 Closing Comments from the Chair

The Chair thanked members for their patience and contributions, noting that it had been a productive meeting. He gave his apologies in advance for the November meeting.

134.26 Meeting Close Time

The meeting closed at 9.49 pm.

135.26 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Ducklington Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 4 November 2026 at 7.30 pm in the Lilac Room, The Village Hall. The Chair gave his apologies in advance for that meeting.

Signed: …… Date: ……

(Chair, Ducklington Parish Council)