



**Minutes of the Meeting of
WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL
Held at the Village Hall on Thursday, 9th July 2026 at 8pm**

Councillors Present: Jim Donahue (Chairman), Diana Smith (Vice-Chairman), Katherine Higley, Romilly Swann, Bernarde Hyde and Debbie Leach.

Officers Present: Brian Inglis (Clerk and RFO)

Public and Press: None Present

District or County Councillor: Cllr Peter Dragonetti (SODC)

- 1 **Apologies for Absence & Parish Council Declaration** – There were apologies from Cllr Paul O’Grady.
Cllr Leach read the Parish Council Declaration
- 2 **Declarations of Interest** – None recorded
- 3 **To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting of Thursday 11th June 2026.**
The Council RESOLVED to approve the minutes, and these were signed by the Chairman.
- 4 **Public Forum** – No public present
- 5 **Chairman’s Announcements** - See **Appendix 1**
- 6 **To receive reports from District and County Councillors**
 - 6.1 SODC District Councillor – Cllr Dragonetti expanded on a previously circulated report – See **Appendix 2**
 - 6.2 OCC County Councillor – No report
- 7 **Planning Applications** – Councillors agreed on responses to the following applications
 - 7.1 **P26/S1609/HH** - House: Proposed front extension, insertion of new windows to first floor side elevation and rooflights to main house. Roof: Retiling of main house roof with tiles to match, replacement double glazed windows to main house. Garage: Demolition of existing conservatory, construction of new pitched roof extension for home gym and raising of existing roof to enable home office in roof space.
Swanston West, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames, Reading RG8 7ER
Response: Councillors voted to delegate this decision to the SODC Conservation Officer.
 - 7.2 **P25/S3121/O** - The erection of four dwellings with all matters reserved except access (Amended).
Land south of Hardwick Road, Hardwick Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames, RG8 7HL
Response: Councillors voted to restate the previously submitted objection to this application.
Further comments submitted by the Parish Council are available to view on the SODC Planning Portal.
- 8 **Planning Update** – There was no update.

9 **Finance:**

9.1 To approve the payment schedule for July and to note payments and receipts since the last meeting:

Payments:	Sub-total	VAT	Total
Clerk Salary for July			693.35
HMRC (PAYE and NICs – Q1)			209.55
Claire Connell (Internal Auditor)			280.00
Leslie Maynerd (MOWS Expenses)			38.54
Richard Williams (Bulletin/Postage Expenses) PAID			13.32
OALC (Councillor Training)	125.00	25.00	150.00
Scofell Landscapes (Monthly Grounds Maintenance)	729.16	145.83	874.99
Lanes Mains (Village Green Water Main Replacement)			5780.00
Lloyds Bank – July Bank Charges DD			4.25
Receipts: Councillors noted the following -			
HMRC – VAT Reclaim for 2025-2026			6218.71
Warmingham and Co. – Bulletin Advertising			195.00

9.2

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the payment schedule. RFO to action.

9.3 **Bank Statement and Reconciliation for June -**

Documents were scrutinised by councillors. The Reconciliation report was approved by Councillors.

9.4 **Budget Monitoring -** Councillors considered a budget monitoring document to the end of June 2026.

9.5 **Approval of August Payments –** Councillors approved the following list of payments. RFO to action.

Payment	Sub-total	VAT	Total
Clerk Salary for August			693.35
Lloyds Bank Charges			4.25
Scofell Landscapes (Monthly Grounds Maintenance)	729.16	145.83	874.99
Information Commissioner's Office (ICO Annual Fee)			47.00

10 **Tea Hut Feasibility:** Cllr Donahue gave a brief update to Councillors on rough costings of the project, and noted some messages of support from residents. This was followed by a brief discussion among Councillors. Cllr Donahue will bring a further update to the next meeting.

11 **Motion: To add Health and Safety as a standard agenda item at future Parish Council meetings.**

Proposer: Cllr Hyde. Seconder: Cllr Donahue.

Councillors voted in favour of this motion. (Action – Clerk to add to future agendas as a standard item)

12 **Motion: To develop and maintain a risk register for regular review.**

Proposer: Cllr Hyde. Seconder: Cllr Donahue.

Councillors voted in favour of this motion. (Action – Cllr Hyde to develop the register. Clerk to maintain)

13 **Motion: To adopt a document and policy register.**

Proposer: Cllr Hyde. Seconder: Cllr Donahue.

Councillors voted in favour of this motion. (Action – Clerk to develop and maintain the register)

14 **Parish Council Action List.** Some minor updates and additional Councillor responsibilities were added

15 The Playground group gave an update on legal advice received to date on a boundary issue. Councillors agreed that further legal and professional guidance should be sought with a view to agreeing on the next steps.

16 Pursuant to Item 15, Councillors approved further spending, up to approximately £5,000 on legal fees and any professional or statutory fees incurred by taking a course of action as a result of advice received.

17 **To confirm the date and time of next meeting –** Thursday 10th September 2026 at 8pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

APPENDIX 1 – CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS – Cllr Jim Donahue

Star Pubs and the Ferryboat Inn – The Parish Council had received several concerns from residents about the previous landlord of the Ferryboat Inn. Whilst the Parish Council does not have any responsibility for the regulation of commercial enterprises, we agreed that I should write a letter to Star Pubs, as Chairman of the Parish Council, highlighting the potential impacts to the community from their operations and requesting that they ensure rigorous due diligence is followed for the selection of future landlords.

The Parish Council received a constructive response where they outlined their upcoming plans: “We are currently preparing the pub for its next chapter with a new tenant and are working hard to ensure the site is ready to reopen as soon as possible. Our intention is to bring the pub back into operation and re-establish it as a thriving venue at the heart of the community. We welcome the Parish Council’s offer of support and would value working positively together to help make The Ferryboat Inn a long-term success for the village.”

Replacement of water infrastructure on the Village Green – Despite previous attempts to repair water leaks on the Village Green, recent water bills indicate that there are severe leaks in the plastic water pipe infrastructure that runs beneath the Village Green. The Parish Council and Cricket Club have been working together to have water contractors investigate the likely cause of the leaks. The feedback we have had was that the plastic material used for the pipes dates back to the 1980s and is known to be prone to leaks, especially given its age. To avoid ongoing problems, the Parish Council approved funding of a replacement system with modern piping material under the length of the Village Green that should last for several decades. This work was successfully completed in June.

Eastfield Lane resurfacing – Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has confirmed the timing of the much-needed Eastfield Lane re-surfacing work. Some of the work will also be on the High Street at the intersection with Eastfield Lane and in front of the Greyhound in preparation for the pedestrian crossing described below. There will be traffic disruption and road closures impacting both Eastfield Lane and the High Street/B471 with a diversion via Goring.

- **Wednesday 8th July until Wednesday 22nd July** – Not full road closures but some disruption is likely for 11 days to install new kerbing and drainage which will be completed between the hours of **07:30 and 17:00**.
- **Thursday 23rd July until Monday 27th July** – 3 days with full road closures during off-peak hours (not rush hour) to complete siding out and ironworks adjustment which will be completed between the hours of **09:30 and 15:30**. **Both the High Street and Eastfield Lane will be closed from 9:30am but will be open for the Primary School runs in the morning and afternoon.** There will be no work or closures over the weekend of the 25th and 26th July.
- **Tuesday 28th & Wednesday 29th July** – 2 full overnight road closures of Eastfield Lane and the High Street/B471 between the hours of **20:00 and 06:00** to resurface the full width of the carriageway and reinstate all existing and legal road markings and lines.

High Street and Eastfield Lane pedestrian crossing plans

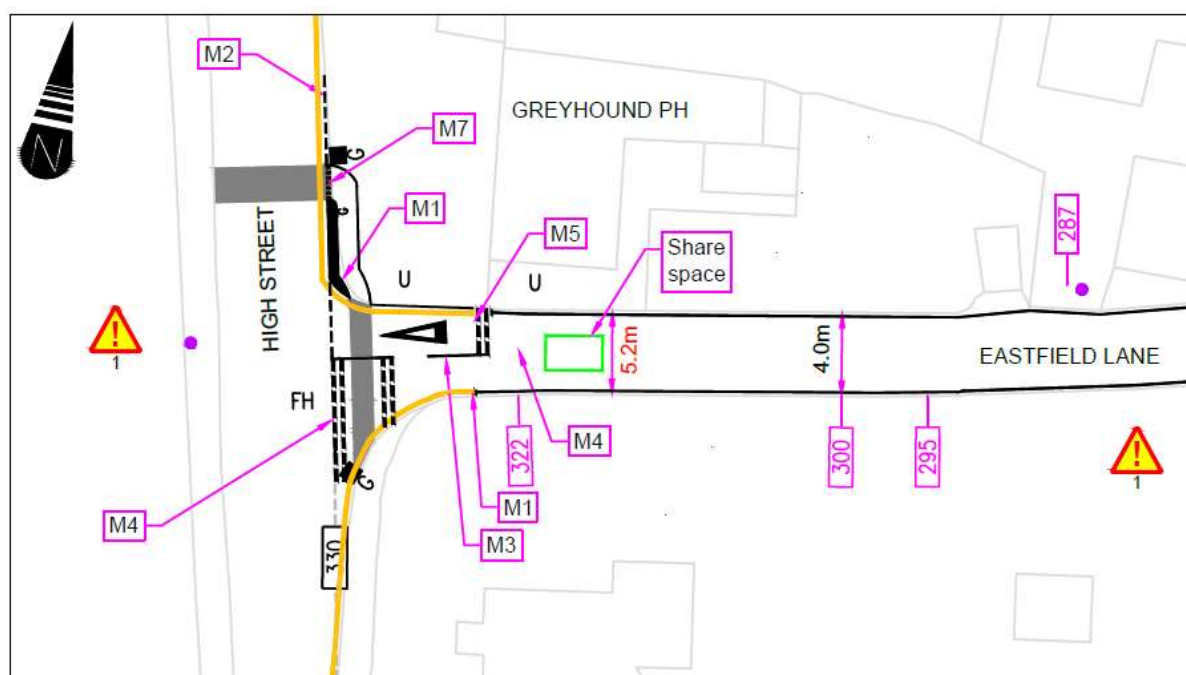
The Parish Council has been working with OCC on the plans shown below for the pedestrian virtual crossings near the Greyhound. The crossings will include line markings for virtual crossing over the High Street and on Eastfield Lane. There will also be marking on Eastfield Lane to emphasise the pedestrian priority and to ease vehicles passing each other before the narrower section.

The diagram shows grey crossing virtual pavements in the road and across from a previously dropped kerb opposite the Greyhound to the Greyhound car park. This is the location we planned as part of the recent residents parking restrictions that now has 20m clear visibility to both the north and the south when crossing in accordance with traffic safety guidelines. There will also be a virtual pavement across Eastfield Lane to the High Street pavement south of Eastfield Lane for those walking in the direction of Pangbourne.

OCC clarified that the virtual footpath at the back of the pub car park would be bordered on one side by double yellow lines indicating no parking on the road and by a hatched white line on the other side. OCC has stated that the crossing will not reduce the existing vehicle parking in front of the pub as the road will act as the pedestrian path on Eastfield Lane. OCC also confirmed that the virtual pedestrian pavement across the roads would be grey. These are normally red, but they are recommending grey for the village Conservation Area.

Pedestrians walking down Eastfield Lane would use the road as usual, as the narrow section near the High Street is too narrow to segregate pedestrians and vehicles. OCC are therefore proposing to use bespoke road marking transfers to emphasise and encourage a ‘Shared Space’ (one making to be installed at either end of the narrow section) as this is a recognised symbol. Eastfield Lane as a shared space is essentially what already occasionally happens, and, with

the road marking transfer, this will add extra clarity for all drivers – especially those unfamiliar with the area. Weather permitting, the line marking will follow the resurfacing by a few days at the end of July/early August.



ROADMARKING KEY:

- M1** DIAG. 1018.1 - CONTINUOUS DOUBLE YELLOW LINES 75mm GAP, 75mm WIDE
- M2** DIAG. 1010 - INTERMITTENT WHITE LINE, 1000mm MARK, 1000mm GAP AND 100mm WIDE
- M3** DIAG. 1004 - INTERMITTENT WHITE CENTRE LINE, 4000mm MARK, 2000mm GAP AND 100mm WIDE
- M4** DIAG. 1003A - INTERMITTENT WHITE STOP AND GIVE WAY MARKING, 600mm MARK, 300mm GAP AND 200mm WIDE
- M5** DIAG. 1023A - GIVE WAY MARKING 3750mm LONG, 1250mm WIDE
- M6** DIAG. 1012.1 - SOLID WHITE EDGE LINE, 100mm WIDE
- M7** DIAG. 1003B - INTERMITTENT WHITE LINE, 300mm MARK, 150mm GAP AND 100mm WIDE

Benches on Village Green removed – Cllr Hyde has removed two benches on the village green that were damaged and unsafe for visitors to the village green. Cllr Hyde is investigating options to replace them. A resident asked about the removal of benches. I explained the situation but clearly lack of benches is missed by residents in the village and we should get them replaced as soon as we can.

Former District Councillor Pearl Slatter – I have been contacted by the family of former District Councillor Pearl Slatter to make us aware of her recent passing. The Funeral will be held at St Jonh the Baptist on Whitchurch Hill on the 31st of July at 12pm followed by a wake at the Sun Pub.

Residents' issues:

- A resident highlighted a poor-quality repair on a layby on the High street. I have reported this and is now fixed.
- A residents raised concerns about old building with corrugated roof behind Cricket Pavillion as risk for young children. Cricket Club confirmed that they don't own it. I propose that the Parish Council have it removed along with any other unused items behind the pavilion. Perhaps start with a Green Team activity.
- A resident of Manor raised concerns that the roundabout was severely overgrown and looking untidy. Another resident used to cut the grass but he is now ill and unable to do this job. Cllr Higley clarify that the land is owned by SOHA and it is their responsibility to maintain it. She has contacted SOHA and they will get in touch with the resident.

APPENDIX 2 – DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – Cllr Peter Dragonetti

Local Government Review

Although the decision on what would replace SODC when it is abolished was supposed to be announced after the May elections, we have heard nothing. Apparently, the current position is that the matter is "on the minister's desk", and that announcement should be made before the summer recess.

In addition to the LGR, which covers the creation of a Unitary Authority, there is also the issue of a Strategic Authority, possibly with a mayor, that is currently expected to be called Thames Valley and include Buckinghamshire, Windsor, Berkshire as well as Oxfordshire. Again, no announcement yet.

There is the matter of the Health Authorities, which are now facing yet another of the reorganisations that seem to come round every 5 years or so. I think that the Oxfordshire Authority is being merged with Berkshire, and will cover primary care as well as hospitals.

Planning System

It seems pretty certain that the system of Planning Committee decisions on most minor applications will be ended from 31 October, and that objections by Parish Councils, or indeed ward members, will no longer trigger committee decisions, with it all being decided by Planning Officers.

Local Plan

The dual development of the 2035 Local Plan and the 2045 Plan seems to be going ahead.

Land Charges System

As part of the upgrading of various IT systems, the Land Charges system is being upgraded, not least because the original software is no longer supported. Although this has caused problems to some property transactions, this task had to be done carefully and properly, as the provision of incorrect information could result in the Council being liable for substantial costs if information was not supplied or was wrong.