Minutes of the Meeting of
WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL
Held at the Village Hall on Thursday, 8th October 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: None Present

1 **Apologies for Absence & Parish Council Declaration** – There were no apologies.
Cllr Swann read the Parish Council Declaration

2 **Declarations of Interest –** None recorded

3 **To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting of Thursday 10th September 2026.**
The Council RESOLVED to approve the minutes, and these were signed by the Chairman.

4 **Public Forum** – No public present

5 Councillors noted the resignation of Cllr Paul O'Grady. A Notice of Casual Vacancy has been posted. If no election is called by 13th October, the Council can proceed with a process of filling the vacancy by co-option.

6 Councillors noted the resignation of The Clerk, with an agreed extended notice period of 3 months and a termination date of 14th December 2026. The Clerk will not be required to attend the Parish Council meetings in November and December, and will assist with a handover to the new Clerk if this is required.

7 **Chairman's Announcements -** See **Appendix 1**

8 **To receive reports from District and County Councillors**
8.1 SODC District Councillor – No report
8.2 OCC County Councillor – No report

9 **Planning Applications** – Councillors agreed on a response to the following application.
9.1 **P26/S3775/HH –** Fawney, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7DD
Erection of a single storey side extension, dormer extension, gravelled car parking and pathway, and alteration to the fenestration. **Response:** Councillors voted to support the application

10 **Planning Update –** There was no update on a previously circulated report from The Clerk.

11 **Finance**:
11.1 To approve the payment schedule for October:

Payment	Sub-total	VAT	Total
Staff Expenditure (October)			711.70
HMRC (PAYE / NICs Q2)			171.83
Gill Goodwin (Reimburse – Green Team Expenses)			22.98
Scofell Landscapes (Monthly Grounds Maintenance)	729.16	145.83	874.99

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

11.2

Receipts: Councillors noted the following -	
South Oxfordshire DC (Precept 2/2)	14645.50
EQ Care (Bulletin Advertising)	195.00

11.3 **Bank Statement and Reconciliation for September -**
Documents were scrutinised by councillors. The Reconciliation report was approved by Councillors.

12 **Motion: To approve the adoption of an Equality and Diversity Policy.**
Proposer: Cllr Smith. **Seconder:** Cllr Hyde
Resolution: Councillors approved the new policy (Action: Clerk to publish)

13 **Motion: To approve the adoption of a General and Sexual Harassment Policy.**
Proposer: Cllr Smith. **Seconder:** Cllr Hyde
Resolution: Councillors approved the new policy (Action: Clerk to publish)
Following the adoption of new policies at items 12 and 13, Councillors agreed that Cllr Hyde would oversee the new Parish Council policy register (Action – Clerk to update and send to Cllr Hyde)

14 **Motion:** To procure two benches to replace two unusable Village Green benches at a projected cost of £1,860. Size: width 150cm, height 94cm, depth 63cm. Material: heavy duty teak
Proposer: Cllr Hyde. **Seconder:** Cllr Donahue
Resolution: Councillors approved the purchase of two benches within the projected costs, noting that a resident of the village may wish to make a donation towards this (Action – Cllr Hyde to progress)

15 Cllr Smith led a discussion on the potential use and location of Parish Council notice boards, both within and outside the Conservation Area. Following a useful discussion with wide ranging Councillor input, Cllr Smith will explore various options and will bring a motion to the next PC meeting. (Action – Cllr Smith to progress)

16 Cllr Donahue led a discussion on a proposed draft agreement with Whitchurch Cricket Club for community use of the cricket pavilion. Following a useful discussion with wide ranging Councillor input, Cllr Donahue will request copies of Cricket Club annual expenditure in order to arrive at a grant application amount to be considered by Councillors at a future meeting. (Action – Cllr Donahue to progress)

17 **Health and Safety –** Councillors discussed a range of issues, with no decisions taken.

18 **Parish Council Action List.** The list was updated, with some actions being re-allocated.
New action **–** Cllr Hyde to look into Parish Council responsibilities, if any regarding water safety.

19 **Items for Report and Inclusion on the next Agenda –** deadline Thursday, 5st November 2026.

20 **To confirm the date and time of next meeting –** Thursday 12th November 2026 at 8pm.

Signed…….. Date……..

APPENDIX 1 – CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS – **Cllr Jim Donahue**

We have continued discussions with Whitchurch Cricket Club (WCC) on community use of the of the Cricket Pavilion:

- I provided feedback from the Parish Council to the WCC that we would be reluctant to have Tilehurst CC use the Village Green for 10 or more Saturdays in the summer as it would block access to the Village Green without significant benefits to the village. The WCC seemed to come to a similar conclusion, given the amount of work involved and wear and tear on the Village Green surface.

- The WCC would prefer an annual grant from the PC to subsidise the operational costs of the Pavilion. In exchange they would make it available to community organisations free of charge. Private rental of the pavilion would be charged in a similar manner to the Village Hall.
- A draft agreement between the WCC and PC on this will be discussed under a separate agenda item.
- Separately we have heard from the primary school Parents Association with tentatively plans for a fun children's circus on 7th May. The Cricket Club seemed supportive with feedback that it would be best to have the tent by the car park end, which makes sense anyway, and they can fence off the cricket square.

I have followed up on some of the issues raised at the recent MP Surgery at Village Hall:

1. **Condition of Hardwick Road** – the upper narrow section of the road is in bad shape due to the poorly repaired utility trenches several years ago that have been getting worse. I have identified 23 areas that need to be resurfaced each approx. 1m x 5m. OCC Highways have agreed to inspect the road by Friday October 2nd.
2. **Poor conditions of the B471 from Whitchurch Hill to Cray's Pond** – I have alerted the Goring Heath Parish Council of my concerns and that I have also been raised by residents in both Whitchurch-on-Thames and Whitchurch Hill. Their initial reply was that this is not an issue that had been raised to them.
3. **SODC Flood Resource** – I have re-engaged with the SODC Flooding and Drainage Engineer who agreed to take advantage of the current dry conditions to try to insert a CCTV camera and clear the pipe under houses on Eastfield Lane as a starting point. This was done on 28th September and whilst we are waiting for the official outcome, the good news is that it appears that no blockage was found. This rules out one of the suspected factors contributing to flood risks identified after the 2014 flooding, but we were unable to fully investigate until now. It also reinforces our current strategy of limiting the water flow upstream of Eastfield Lane.
4. **Cedar Lodge noise issues** – This is an issue that is of ongoing nuisance to residents in the area surrounding the Care Home since it has been opened over a year ago. This is something that SODC is ultimately responsible for and Freddie and Maggie, as SODC leader, had stated that they were working with SODC Planning Enforcement on. I have chased them and had an updated that SODC enforcement was still working to get a Noise Assessment contractor in place, which sadly is the same update residents have been getting for the past two months.

LCWIP - I am working with the Goring Gap Active Travel Group as the coordinator for a new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The LCWP will cover the area along the river between Wallingford on one side and Caversham and Sonning Common on the other.

- OCC has recently confirmed that £20,000 of funding is available to hire a consultant to simulate routes to prioritise walking and cycle journeys in the area.
- The scope would include Pangbourne and Streatley on the West Berkshire side, and potentially Purley and Tidmarsh.
- A key output would be a list of prioritised improvements in the area where improvements in cycling or walking routes could improve take-up of active travel in the area.
- I would expect that the plan would include improvements to the narrow access road on the Pangbourne side of the tool bride and potentially improvements to the route to Caversham via Hardwick and Mapledurham.

Remembrance Sunday Traffic Volunteers – Cllr Hyde and her husband Pete have volunteered to stop the traffic flow at the upper narrows during the Remembrance Sunday ceremony.

Residents' issues:

- **Memorial Plaques refurbished** – A member of the Green Team is refurbishing the three plaques by the cherry trees near the Village Green car park gate. They had been removed while the refurbishment what in progress, but this has now been completed. Thanks to Gill Godwin of the Green team who coordinated the work with the help of Pete Woolhouse and Charles Cotgreave.
- **School sign cleared on Hardwick Road** – Thanks to Mark Reynolds for helping to cut back the growth over the school crossing cautions and 20mph signs on Hardwick Road that were previously lacking visibility.
- **Protruding bolt** – Thanks to Tim Hardwick for having a dangerous protruding bolt reduced in size on the new gate at the top of Muddy Lane.
- **Water Leak** – Thanks to Rev. James Leach for identifying a leak on the new Village Green water infrastructure by the football net. This has now been repaired by the contractor that did the work.
- **LED Street Light on during the daytime on Eastfield Lane** – A resident raised this to me and I have raised this as a FixMyStreet report.