



HERMITAGE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting of Hermitage Parish Council held at
Adelaide Room, Holy Trinity Church, Hermitage, Berkshire RG18 9ST
on Tuesday 18th August 2026 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr P Dick OBE (Chairman), Cllr M Foster (Vice Chairman), Cllr M Powers, Cllr R Cottingham, Cllr D Brown, Cllr B Slevin, Dist. Cllr Heather Codling Ms N Pierce (clerk).

01.08.26 Public participation

None.

02.08.26 Apologies for absence

None. Cllr Goldsmith did not attend.

03.08.26 Minutes of meeting held on 22nd July 2026

The minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

04.08.26 Declarations of interest

None.

05.08.26 District Councillors Report and Information from West Berks Council

Monthly report circulated on 13th August 2026. There have been no comments or questions submitted.

06.08.26 Planning

6.1 New applications

None.

6.2 Decision notices

26/00140/FULMAJ, Land at End of Charlotte Close Hermitage Thatcham. Erection of 16 dwellings and associated landscape and highway works. Section 73 application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of Planning Permission 20/00912/FULEXT. WBC approved.

07.08.26 Finance

Clerk and RFO report circulated and noted.

Financial position as of 31st July 2026

Balance carried forward (Inc. S106 contributions)	£249,249.92
Receipts to 31 st July	£33,457.25
Authorised Payments to 31 st July	£42,660.56
Payments not processed by 31 st July	£0.00
Balance in hand (total)	£240,046.61

7.1 Payments for consideration July 2026

The following were noted/ approved.

Sunshine Commercial Services Ltd monthly charge	£331.56
Grass maintenance/Contractor	£1,109.50
Cost of administration	£1,891.23
HMRC, Tax and NI	£650.71
Tactical Management Ltd, dog bins (July)	£359.58
WBCS, 4 th August volunteers	£100.00
Hermitage Primary School, woodland lodge let, defib training	£22.50
Barlow & Sons (Hermitage) Ltd, supplies for exclusion zone fencing	857.13

Cripps Fencing Services, labour to erect fencing in exclusion zone	1,620.00
All endorsed on line 20 th August 2026	£6,942.21

Direct Debits previously approved

Noted.

1&1 Ionos (website) monthly payment for June	£21.60
NEST monthly payment for June	£113.94
Lloyds Bank charges	£4.25

7.2 Receipts (to note)

CCLA interest £243.72

7.3 Receipts and Payments to date

Nothing to note.

7.4 Tax and NI - HMRC and Payroll Liaison

Cllr Foster reported he has registered with HMRC and will provide an update at the September meeting, still awaiting code from HMRC. Cllr Dick thanked Cllr Foster for his work. **MF**

7.5 Internal Audit 2025-26

The action log has the following recommendations, which were accepted as HPC actions: -

R1/ To adopt and publish ICO Publication Scheme: distributed for consideration. **Clerk**

Cllr Goldsmith has reviewed this and advised that it would require tailoring to include HPC specific information. **AG**

R2/ To publish the Data Protection Policy : Cllr Goldsmith to update at September meeting. **AG**

R3/ Publish missing info on website: 2021-22 & 2022-23 Section 3 audited: Done. **Clerk**

7.6 Role of FWP

Cllr Foster has shared information about the responsibilities of the Finance Working Party. AGAR and budget setting will be added, and the updated details will be circulated to all councillors. Cllr Cottingham advised the FWP review payments, bank statements, and minutes every quarter. Cllr Slevin should also be included in the next FWP meeting. **MF/RC**

08.08.26 Administrative matters

8.1 Policies

Information & Data Protection (AG): to update at September meeting.

Finance Policy (MF): It was advised this policy is not required; to refer to financial regulations.

Key Policies:

The following policies are already in place and up to date:

Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Complaints, Data Protection (GDPR) Freedom of information, Document retention, Privacy notice, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Asset Register, Health & Safety.

Policies to work on for future adoption:

The following policies were allocated as noted. Clerk to send draft NALC policies to the relevant policy holder to work on. **NP**

Asset Management(NP)

Disciplinary & Grievance(BS)

Sickness and Absence(DB)

8.2 Website

The new website is up to date, but the old org.uk site still appears before gov.uk. The clerk has asked the platform holder to remove the page but will follow up as it has not been taken down yet. **NP**

8.3 DSE Assessment

Done.

8.4 Safety Assessments

Cllr Cottingham and Clerk have sent copies of all available risk assessments to Cllr Goldsmith so she can identify which others are required and produce them. **AG**

- 09.08.26 Burial ground**
Cllrs Cottingham and Brown attended the burial ground with the contractor. Need to plant hawthorn whip and possible 1 metal post/wire; to do when the weather is better. **RC/DB**
- 10.08.26 Highways**
None.
- 11.08.26 HPC properties**
- 11.1 Playgrounds**
1. Furze Hill (MP) Hermitage Green (DB) Pinewood Park (AG): all fine.
 2. Verbal update on yellow rattle on recreation ground: a site visit is required to establish which type of grass seeds will be required. **RC**
 3. Hermitage Green: to approve mending and painting of 2 springys, £375: approved.
 4. Hermitage Green & Furze Hill: to approve removal of concrete surrounds, £2,800 plus vat: approved.
 5. Furze Hill: to approve supply and installation of Buglo 1133 frame and slide with telescope option £7,850, and Buglo 4003 roundabout total £2,275: approved.
- Clerk to apply for certificate of lawfulness. **NP**
- Cllrs Foster and Dick thanked the clerk for her hard work on this project.
6. To consider Wicksteed annual inspection report: nothing on there is considered a significant risk, but "playground inspectors" need to note which things they need to keep an eye on for deterioration (MP/DB/AG).
- 11.2 Furze Hill & Recreation Ground**
1. Cllr Cottingham provided a verbal report on Furze and will check the work done at the exclusion zone to ensure all materials used. **RC/NP**
- 11.3 Other Open spaces**
- There are no updates to report regarding Lipscomb Crescent or Charlotte Close. A resident has brought attention to a tree on Dines Way green that is overhanging Deacons Lane and may require maintenance. The Clerk is to include this in the list for the Health and Safety tree inspector and inquire about the scheduled date of inspection. **NP**
- 11.4 Land off Pinewood Crescent**
- Questions have been finalised, and the completed questionnaire has been circulated prior to the meeting: Cllr Cottingham to make two small changes. To print for residents, post on Website and place on noticeboards. To look at environmental issues when we come to do the work. **RC/NP**
- 11.5 Replacement Noticeboard at the shop**
- The noticeboard at the Hermitage shop needs replacing. To replace the wooden noticeboard with a metal one: unanimously agreed. Clerk to obtain quotes. **NP**
- 12.08.26 Other matters**
- 12.1 Village Hall**
- Cllr Powers attended the village hall meeting. No significant news to report other than it is intended to cut back some foliage between village hall and HPC land.
- 12.2 Defibrillator**
- Checks done.
- 12.3 Action log review**
- The action log was reviewed, and the following actions remain open that do not appear elsewhere:
- 18.9 8.3 To research PC accounting packages available **Clerk**
 - 16.04 8.1 To arrange for the forwarding of email **Clerk**

12.4 Community Speed Watch

Cllr Dick has found a resident interested in rejoining and another new participant, with two more people possibly willing to help. With support from CSW Curridge and Cllr Dick, progress is expected.

PD

12.5 Blister pack collection at Chieveley surgery

Cllr Brown to liaise with the surgery at the next PPG meeting in September.

DB

12.6 Village signs requiring clerk's new email address

To update 5 signs with the new clerk email address(Furze Hill), and to replace one sign (Pinewood Park Muga) in the sum of £428 plus vat: approved.

12.7 Councillor vacancies

To advertise the vacancies through the Primary School newsletter and governing body, scouts, cubs, brownies, guides and any other relevant bodies.

PD/NP

13.08.26 Other Correspondence received

List circulated.

14.08.26 Reports on meetings of outside bodies

Cllr Cottingham attended the planning application site visit for 3 Blake Rd. The Clerk arranged a speaking slot for HPC at Wednesday 19th August planning committee. If no one can attend, Cllr Cottingham will provide a statement to be read on HPC's behalf.

15.08.26 Any other business (information only)

None.

16.08.26 Date of the next meeting

Thursday 17th September 2026, 7.30pm in the Adelaide Room, Holy Trinity Church
There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.58pm.

Signed:

Dated: