



**HERMITAGE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the meeting of Hermitage Parish Council held at**  
**Adelaide Room, Holy Trinity Church, Hermitage, Berkshire RG18 9ST**  
**on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr A Goldsmith (Chairman), Cllr D Brown (Vice Chairman),  
Cllr V Burgess, Cllr M Powers, Cllr M Dye(19.30-20.31), Ms N Pierce (clerk).

**01.04.26 Public participation**

A resident raised concerns about speeds on B4009 approaching Priors Court roundabout from Curridge and cited instances of accidents. He believes the 40mph limit is too fast, combined with poor visibility at the roundabout. He has complained to WBC, who said to contact PC. The Chairman outlined the history of the 20mph proposals and noted that HPC and WB councillors had requested 20mph at the roundabout because it was an accident blackspot, with a reduction of the 40mph limit. But WBC had said none of the injuries at the roundabout had been attributed to speed and drivers wouldn't respect 30mph between Curridge and Hermitage because they would not see the reason for it: no houses.

She advised that HPC had objected to the proposals (except for the school) because they did not cover such problem areas and were waiting to hear the result.

Cllr Dye advised that he is now trained for Speedwatch and it has started activities again.

**02.04.26 Apologies for absence**

Cllr Ruth Cottingham, Cllr Codling, Cllr Dick OBE.

Chairman suspended standing orders suspended to advise on possible future meeting absences; Cllr Brown may chair if needed.

Chairman advised that co-option cannot be undertaken as Part 2 and proposed that unnumbered agenda item Councillor co-option was brought forward. Agreed unanimously.

**Councillor co-option**

Co-option of Brenda Slevin was proposed and carried unanimously. Register of interest and declaration of acceptance of office forms were completed and Cllr Slevin joined the meeting.

**03.04.26 Minutes of meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

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

**04.04.26 Declarations of interest**

Cllr Burgess declared an interest in agenda item 12.5 Land off Pinewood Crescent.

**05.04.26 District Councillors Report and Information from West Berks Council**

Circulated on 10<sup>th</sup> April. Councillor Goldsmith reported a more recent consultation regarding proposed developments in the northeast of Thatcham, which may include up to 2,500 new properties, a school, and recreational facilities. It was suggested that the Parish Council consider sharing this information and that on other consultations, particularly residents survey, on Facebook; however, it was noted that WBC has already posted these details on social media, making further dissemination unnecessary.

**06.04.26 Planning**

**6.1 New applications**

None.

**6.2 Decision notices**

26/00129/HOUSE, 22 Blake Road, Hermitage, Thatcham, RG18 9WN. Single storey rear extension and single storey side utility extension.

WBC approved.

25/02359/FUL, Windmill Farm, Everington Lane, Hermitage, Thatcham RG18 9XP. Section 73: Variation of Condition 13 - BREEAM of planning permission reference 22/03032/FUL

WBC approved.

25/02069/HOUSE, The Corner House, Yattendon Road, Hermitage, Thatcham RG18 9RW. Two-storey infill rear extension. Conversion of the existing roof space to habitable accommodation with the addition of rooflights. Section 73 application to vary Condition (2) Approved Plans of planning permission.

WBC approved.

### 6.3 Fence at Doctors Lane

WBC had not provided any updates at the time of the meeting.

## 07.04.26 Finance

Clerk and RFO report circulated and noted.

### Financial position as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

Balance carried forward (Inc. S106 contributions)	£240,206.86
Receipts to 31 <sup>st</sup> March	£83,515.92
Authorised Payments to 31 <sup>st</sup> March	£74,472.86
Payments not processed by 31 <sup>st</sup> March	£0.00
Balance in hand (total)	£249,249.92

### 7.1 Payments for consideration April 2026

The following were noted/ approved.

Sunshine Commercial Services Ltd monthly charge	331.56
Grass maintenance/Contractor	841.25
Cost of administration	1,160.17
HMRC, Tax and NI	188.19
Administrative expenses, paper	19.99
Tactical Management Ltd, dog bins (March)	254.39
Ruth Cottingham, moss killer for MUGA, rust treatment for playground	16.98
Parish online, new website set up	360.00
Autela Payroll Services, December 2025 – March 2026	147.36
The Fox, catering for APA	500.00
Newbury College, outstanding invoice 100103, 27 March 2024	104.40
Newbury College, printing for APA	144.00
Village Hall, room hire for APA	142.55
Zurich insurance 2026-27	2,058.88
Barlows (Hermitage), Furze Hill	11.47
Village Hall Grant 2026-27	889.00
Holy Trinity Church Grant 2026-27	1,700.00
Pre- School Grant 2026-27	350.00
Rainbows Grant 2026-27	371.00
Community First Responder Grant 2026-27	964.00
The Downland Practice Grant 2026-27	10,000.00
<b>All endorsed on line 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026</b>	<b>20,555.19</b>

It was noted that it had not yet proved possible to get Bank viewing rights for Cllr Foster. Clerk used to have administrative rights, but no longer. To be pursued **FWP/Clerk**

### Direct Debits previously approved

Noted.

1&1 Ionos (website) monthly payment for March	£8.40
NEST monthly payment for March	£113.94

### 7.2 Receipts (to note)

None.

### **7.3 Receipts and Payments to date**

The commuted sum for Furze Hill has been revised to include the appropriate VAT reclaimed for the financial year ending 2026. Further adjustments to be made to finalise. **Clerk**

### **7.4 CCLA year-end balance**

The year-end balance is £21,435.94

### **7.5 PWLB year-end balance**

The year-end balance is £159,740.61

### **7.6 FWP Report**

The finance working party met on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April, report to be circulated. **FWP**

## **08.04.26 Administrative matters**

1. The revised social media policy was approved. To place on website. **Clerk**

2. It was agreed that a separate email code of conduct is unnecessary, as the IT Policy sufficiently addresses relevant concerns.

3. The equality and diversity policy requires additional time for review before proceeding. **BS**

The chairman queried whether the Financial Risk Assessment still needed approval after comments on the schedule. The clerk said she thought it had been agreed subject to the minor changes, but would check; still needs to go on website **Clerk**

### **8.1 Website**

1. The new website is live but lacks recent agenda, minutes, updated policies and any forthcoming meetings. Cllr Dye will help the clerk. Councillors like the new email, which has additional features.

To arrange for the Hermitage.org websites to transfer to Parish Online. To arrange new email for Cllr Slevin, to delete the 2<sup>nd</sup> email allocated to the clerk as clerk is using

[clerk@hermitageparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hermitageparishcouncil.gov.uk) and to organise the forwarding of hermitage.org emails to new addresses. To set up a website administrator account for Cllr Dye. **Clerk**

2. The clerk is the administrator for email accounts, and it was agreed that the chairman should be a second administrator. **Clerk**

3. The team decided against subscribing to Workdrive, as the new email offers many additional features and may be adequate. This will be reviewed again in six months. Councillors Dye left the meeting at this point.

### **8.2 PC Meeting Room**

Cllr Foster is progressing the purchase of two more tables for the Adelaide Room. **MF**

## **09.04.26 Burial ground**

Nothing to report.

## **10.04.26 Highways**

No further update on parking/ speeding by the school or news on 20mph proposals.

## **11.04.26 HPC properties**

### **11.1 Playgrounds**

Nothing to report from inspections.

Two further quotes for overlay and complete resurfacing at both Hermitage Green and Furze Hill playgrounds are still required. **Clerk**

### **11.2 Furze Hill & Recreation Ground**

Cllr Cottingham provided a written report (attached). Quotes have been drafted for repair of the exclusion zone fence. Chairman has some amendments to make before sending **AG**

### **11.3 Other open spaces**

Nothing to note.

### **11.4 Land off Pinewood Crescent**

The Chairman noted that she had not had time to update the discussion document. **AG/RC**

## 12.04.26 Other matters

### 12.1 Village Hall

Cllr Burgess attended the Annual Meeting, where a new chairman was elected. The April 'call my bluff' event was very successful. Clerk to resend the Grant Award document and invite to new Chairman to the APA to provide a report. Clerk

### 12.2 Defibrillator

1. Checks done.

2. The Hermitage community first aid responder will conduct defibrillator training, to seek additional attendance at the APA, and clerk to arrange a session at Woodland Lodge, Hermitage Primary School. The training date will be announced on Facebook. Clerk

### 12.3 Action log review

The action log was reviewed, and the following actions remain open that had not been covered:

8.3 To research PC accounting packages available Clerk

8.5 Bank interest to be transferred to ring fenced funds pro rata. Clerk

8.3 Polices for review: - Information and Data Protection, General Privacy Notice AG

Document retention VB

8.3 Policies to be placed on website Clerk

12.3 To complete DSE assessment Clerk

12.3 To provide Cllr Goldsmith with details for historical tax and NI issue Clerk

Cllr Foster questioned the last of these. The Chairman explained that there was some problem with the payroll company not having paid, which the clerk had pursued with Autela as one of her objectives unsuccessfully. Following her performance review, the Chairman was awaiting details to take it forward.

### 12.4 APA 23<sup>rd</sup> April

Councillors reminded of need to be at Hall for 18:30 and bring tea-towels. Cllr Burgess will collect the key for the Village Hall. Fliers distributed to Cllrs to deliver noting two residents have kindly offered to help. Cllrs Cottingham/Foster to arrange beverages.

### 11.4 Land off Pinewood Crescent

Cllr Goldsmith had yet to revised discussion document. AG

Questioned whether a working party including representative of residents might be a better way forward than trying to talk to all, but Cllr Burgess advised that there was a range of views.

## 13.04.26 Other Correspondence received

List circulated.

## 14.04.26 Reports on meetings of outside bodies

Cllr Brown was present at the PPG meeting and noted that the prescription dispensers were discussed. Cllrs Burgess and Slevin agreed to attend the District Parish Conference on 29 April.

## 15.04.26 Any other business (information only)

None

## 16.04.26 Date of the next meeting

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026, 7.30pm for 8pm **Annual Parish Assembly** at Hermitage Village Hall  
Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026, 7.30pm Annual & Ordinary meetings in the Adelaide Room, Holy Trinity Church

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.13pm.

Signed:

Dated: