



HERMITAGE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting of Hermitage Parish Council held at
Adelaide Room, Holy Trinity Church, Hermitage, Berkshire RG18 9ST
on Wednesday 22nd July 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 A Goldsmith (19.30-20.32pm), Cllr B Slevin, Dist. Cllr Heather Codling (arrival 20.20pm), Ms N Pierce (clerk).

01.07.26 Public participation

None.

Cllr Dick asked all Councillors to monitor their emails and respond promptly. There is a need for more clarity regarding the role of FWP. Appreciation was expressed to Cllr Goldsmith for Pathfinder, and Cllr Dick asked that councillors advise of any items they would like to see in the HPC narrative that he will be preparing in future.

02.07.26 Apologies for absence

None.

03.07.26 Minutes of meeting held on 24th June 2026

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

04.07.26 Declarations of interest

None.

05.07.26 District Councillors Report and Information from West Berks Council

Monthly report circulated on 17th July 2026. Cllr Cottingham was pleased about the recycling of electronic waste.

06.07.26 Planning

6.1 New applications

None.

6.2 Decision notices

26/00850/HOUSE, Home Park, Slanting Hill, Hermitage, Thatcham. Extend existing balcony with new glass pergola over balcony. New external staircase up to balcony. WBC approved.
 25/02283/Land south of Sandhill, Hampstead Norreys Road, Hermitage, Thatcham. Application for approval of details reserved by condition 2 'The Site Development Scheme', 3 'Land Contamination Assessment', 6 'LEMP/Biodiversity Method Statement/Biodiversity Improvements' and 10 'Arboricultural Method Statement of 23/00815 Ful.

WBC split decision; approves in part and refuses in part.

6.3 Land off Charlotte Close

HPC maintains its previous remarks regarding this application.

07.07.26 Finance

Clerk and RFO report circulated and noted.

Financial position as of 30th June 2026

Balance carried forward (Inc. S106 contributions)	£249,249.92
Receipts to 30 th June	£33,213.53
Authorised Payments to 30 th June	£36,146.80
Payments not processed by 30 th June	£0.00
Balance in hand (total)	£246,316.65

7.1 Payments for consideration June 2026

The following were noted/ approved.

Sunshine Commercial Services Ltd monthly charge	£331.56
Grass maintenance/Contractor	£907.50
Cost of administration	£1,159.97
HMRC, Tax and NI	£188.39
Tactical Management Ltd, dog bins (June)	£359.58
Earth Anchors, 3 new dog bins, post and key	£871.80
Wicksteed Leisure Ltd, annual playground inspection	£547.20
Autela Payroll Services Ltd, April - June	£87.97
WBCS, Tuesday 2 nd June donation	£100.00
Hermitage P School, woodland lodge defib training, 9 th July	£22.50
Scott2B Ltd, painting of Hermitage Green play equipment	£1,820.00
All endorsed on line 23 rd July 2026	£6,396.47

Direct Debits previously approved

Noted.

1&1 Ionos (website) monthly payment for June	£9.60
NEST monthly payment for June	£113.94
Lloyds Bank charges	£4.25

7.2 Receipts (to note)

Deposit account interest £131.07.

7.3 Receipts and Payments to date

Nothing to note.

7.4 Tax and NI - HMRC and Payroll Liaison

Cllr Foster advised he is has registered with HMRC and is trying to sort out 2 factor authentication process to connect.

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:

Clerk

R2/ To publish the Data Protection Policy (see below)

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

Clerk

08.07.26 Administrative matters

8.1 Policies

Update on Equality and Diversity Policy (BS): approved. To send to clerk for website. **BS/Clerk**
Disaster Recovery Plan (MP): the recently adopted IT Policy supersedes this policy. Disaster management is the responsibility of WBC who have plans in place and councillor contact details are on website. To remove from schedule as no longer required. **Clerk**

Information & Data Protection (AG): move to August agenda.

General Privacy Notice (AG): approved with addition of text on approval to put photos on website. Cllr Goldsmith to put on website. **AG**

Finance Policy (MF): to consider this policy against the financial regulations that were updated in December 2025, to decide if a separate policy is required. **MF/RC**

8.2 Website

The new website is currently up to date, with all agendas, minutes, and information about forthcoming meetings available for public access. Clerk has communicated with Ionas to request that Hermitage.org.uk platform is taken down, and the DD has been cancelled. Cllr Goldsmith has been set up as the second administrator. **Clerk**

8.3 DSE Assessment

Outstanding.

Clerk

8.4 Safety Assessments

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

The following items were taken out of order to discuss before Cllr Goldsmith had to leave the meeting:

11.1 Playgrounds

Dines Way report: nothing to report.

8.5 Councillor roles

Cllr Powers agreed to take responsibility for Furze Hill playground checks and liaison with Village Hall. Cllr Slevin to join FWP. CSW- see separate item. Clerk to update schedule. **Clerk**

09.07.26 Burial ground

It was decided fencing was not necessary, to consider beech hedge and some straining wire.

RC/DB

10.07.26 Highways

1. WBC contractor is to repaint lines outside school. It is hoped this will happen over the summer holidays.

2. Highways advised they will be doing the remedial work to the pavement adjacent to the new fence at Doctors Lane. To follow this through with WBC. **Clerk**

3. Clerk has sent several emails to the school for comment on 20mph limit, no response received. To remove from agenda. **Clerk**

11.07.26 HPC properties

11.1 Playgrounds

Cllr Dick noted that playground signage still displays the old email address.

Clerk to review all signage within the village and arrange update as necessary. **Clerk**

1. Furze Hill: nothing to report.

Hermitage Green play equipment has been painted: Clerk has confirmed this performed to satisfaction. To place an update on Facebook. Pinewood Park has had green fabric ripped from under soil where the old surface was beneath the cantilever swing; clerk to ask contractor to remove. **Clerk**

To liaise with contractor about new fence post. **RC**

2. Consider WBCS tasks for 4th August: items in Cllr Cottingham's report agreed.

3. Yellow rattle on recreation Ground: ongoing Action to advise costs. **RC**

4. Playground Resurfacing Quotes

Three quotations were considered and a variety of options for the new surface. The successful contractor is Redlynch Leisure Installations; Furze Hill; surface overlay in a single (tbc) colour £20,000. Hermitage Green; replacement wet pour surface in green and 2 new springy seats £17,560. Total cost £36,560 to include £1,000 discount for both sites completing together.

Clerk to advise Redlynch and ask about options for additional preschool age equipment for the playground at Furze Hill. **Clerk**

5. 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).

6. Damage to new surface beneath Cantilever Swing in Pinewood Park

A tile had been removed from the newly installed surface since last inspections. HPC's contractor has reinstated it. Should this incident occur again, it will be reported to the police as vandalism.

11.2 Furze Hill & Recreation Ground

1. Cllr Cottingham provided a verbal report.

Woods middle path, cut back bracken within meters of path. To widen path on the butterfly meadow. Footpath 18 not checked. Village Hall car park: Land rover parked there without a number plate. Chair and manager informed. Logs around car park have been moved away from concrete edge again.

Recreation ground

CA FC goals have been damaged. Clerk has contacted club who say goals are there for all to use, but not usable if chained to MUGA and damaged. Need removing.

Cllr Cottingham will inform community policing of criminal damage and ASB (antisocial behaviour).

RC

2. Repair quotes for the exclusion zone fence have been requested from 7 contractors, the majority declined to quote. Quotation approved in the sum of £1,350 plus vat. Rotten posts to be harvested for future use in the butterfly larder.

3. Furze Hill Signage: Councillors Cottingham and Slevin have been developing ideas for signs to be placed at Furze Hill. Action on-going.

RC/BS

11.3 Other Open spaces

Nothing to report.

11.4 Land off Pinewood Crescent

Questions have been finalised and the completed questionnaire had been circulated prior to the preceding meeting: Action on AG complete. No further actions agreed.

12.07.26 Other matters

12.1 Village Hall

No update.

12.2 Defibrillator

1. Checks done. Primary School to manage their Defibrillator; White Horse Pub, Clerk to manage.

2. Defibrillator training given to the first 10 residents on the list, 9th July. A second training session to be announced on Facebook.

Clerk

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

19.03 8.3 To finalise final sign off sheet for Business Risk Assessment

Clerk

16.04 8.1 To arrange for the forwarding of email

Clerk

12.4 Community Speed Watch

Cllr Dick to liaise with Carolyn Purchase about the way forward. Clerk to send Cllr Dick contact details for resident interested in CSW.

Clerk/PD

12.5 Dog Bins

To site the new dog waste bin on the grass bank on the corner of Chapel Lane: approved.

12.6 Blister pack collection at Chieveley Surgery

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

DB

13.07.26 Other Correspondence received

List circulated.

14.07.26 Reports on meetings of outside bodies

None. Cllr Brown had provided the minutes of the previous PPG meeting before the meeting.

15.07.26 Any other business (information only)

Cllr Burgess's resignation was noted with regret. This and that of Cllr Dye are due to competing pressures on their time.

16.07.26 Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 18th August 2026, 7.30pm in the Adelaide Room, Holy Trinity Church

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.05pm.

Signed:

Dated:

