Milton-under-Wychwood Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 16th April 2025

at Milton-under-Wychwood Village Hall

Present: Cllr Graham Smith, Chairman
Cllr Glynn Allcock
Cllr Rod Blackman
Cllr Jeff Haine
Cllr John Pratt
Vanessa Oliveri, Parish Clerk
Chris Trotman, RFO
County Cllr Liz Leffman
District Cllr Adam Clements
8 members of the public

25/057 Apologies for Absence: were received from Cllr Peter Rawlins and Cllr Pat Ward.

25/058 Declaration of Interests: None to report.

25/059 Minutes of the 19th March 2025: Cllr J Haine proposed to approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19th March 2025. Cllr G Allcock seconded the proposal. A unanimous vote was taken of all in favour of the proposal.

25/060 Matters arising from the February meeting: None.

25/061 Public session for all items related to this Agenda: The applicant to planning ref: 25/00744/FUL The Homestead, Frog Lane MUW and residents to the proposed property spoke at this point. Concerns were raised regarding the proposed erection of a dwelling and detached garage with associated works. The applicant spoke in favour of the proposal. The Chairman stated that the planning application would be considered at item 7.1 on the agenda and the Parish Councillors would consider the application under planning terms.

25/062 To receive the following reports:

1. **Chairman's report –** There was nothing to report as all items are covered on the agenda.
2. **District Councillor's report**
   - Cllr A Clements reported that he would have a conversation with Thames Water with the progress on the works being undertaken at Milton-under-Wychwood.
3. **County Councillor's report**
   - Cllr L Leffman had nothing to report on as it was so close to the County Council election but was happy to answer questions. A question was raised on the progress of the 20 mph speed signs in the village. Cllr Leffman agreed to follow this up and would update the Councillors at the next Parish Council meeting.

25/063 Planning (PW/PR/JH)

1. Ref: 25/00744/FUL The Homestead, Frog Lane, MUW - Erection of a dwelling and detached garage with associated works.
   COMMENT: The Parish Council strongly objected to this planning application.
2. Ref: 25/00920/HHD Greenbanks, Frog Lane, MUW- Erection of a single storey extension and conversion of one bay of integral garage to create additional living space, works to include replacement of three windows with glazed doors.
   COMMENT: No objection.

25/064 RFO report (CT)

1. RFO report- Cllr R Blackman proposed and Cllr J pratt seconded the receipt and approval of the RFO report. The PC unanimously approved it.
2. March Summary – Cllr G Allcock proposed and Cllr J Haine seconded receipt and approval of the March Summary. The PC unanimously approved it.
3. Update on Internal Audit submission – The RFO reported that he had been working with the Internal Auditor on the end of year finance. The Internal Auditor's report was to be an agenda item for the May Parish Council meeting.
4. Matters arising from FinCom – The PC noted that the end of year figures was where they had predicted it to be. The committee had recommended revised wording for the PC's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (see items 5 & 6 below).
5. Standing Orders – The PC received and unanimously approved and adopted the revised PC's Standing Orders.
6. Financial Regulations – The PC received and unanimously approved and adopted the revised PC's Financial Regulations.
7. The PC agreed for the Clerk and the RFO to obtain three insurance quotations in May and to bring the quotations to the July Parish Council meeting for consideration.
8. The RFO had obtained quotations for four new defibrillators in the village as the ten-year guarantee had expired on the existing ones. One supplier had offered a reduced price for a short period of time. A discussion took place on whether new defibrillators should be purchased due to the guarantee being expired. A vote was taken with four in agreement to purchase new defibrillators and one against.
9. Grant funding to assist in purchasing four new defibrillators – The Clerk was to look into whether there was any grant funding available to assist in purchasing four new defibrillators.

25/065 Village green

1. Football pitch improvement update – Cllr G Allcock is still waiting for a quote from the preferred supplier and assistance from the Oxfordshire FA rep to complete the form for their element of the funding.
2. Car park re-surfacing update (GS) – The contact from Mott Bentley (Thames Water contractors) is hoping to visit the car park this week and then put a proposal to his senior managers. In the meantime Cllr J Haine and Cllr P Rawlins have sought an additional quote for the work from a contractor they have used previously. The quote was to be brought to the May PC meeting.
3. Play equipment safety checks – Cllr P Rawlins met the Playdale representative last week who reviewed the operation of the zip wire (a broken spring needs replacing) and looked at other minor defects. They will send a quote for repairs to other items. When the quote is received the information will be combined with the costs of making some repairs ourselves (e.g., filling pot holes) and submit a S106 request to fund the remedial work. In addition, Cllr P Rawlins has already repaired a rocking post on the toddler trim trail and fitted ties to the tennis net to stop it dragging on the ground.
4. Cllr G Allcock updated the Councillors on a request received for a memorial to be placed on the fencing of the basketball court for a short period of time. The PC agreed to this request and for the memorial to be removed a month after the date of the memorial. The PC agreed for Cllr Allcock to replace the basketball net at a cost of £40.00. The Council thanked Cllr Allcock for meeting the family to discuss arrangements of the memorial and bringing the information to the PC for discussion.

25/066 Biodiversity plan (GS/PW)

1. Update on potential TOE grant for Sarah's Meadow – Cllr G Smith had submitted the grant form to TOE and had immediate feedback suggesting that the PC can also apply to TOE to fund the cost of hedging in Sarah's Meadow. Cllr G Smith is seeking three quotes for this work and will circulate the quotes to the Councillors for information and would then amend the grant form to include the hedging costs. The Council agreed for the work to be carried out in the Autumn.
2. The PC noted that Wild Oxford are showing three short films about rivers at the Town Hall, Chipping Norton on 22nd April 2025 at 7.30pm

25/067 Section 137 grants

1. Life Centre – John Witts submitted three documents including a S137 form in which he stated that the grant requested is to help cover a £9,000 shortfall in the 2024 financial year. The PC unanimously agreed for Cllr G Smith to contact the applicant and ask if they could come back to the PC with a more detailed application with a specific requirement.
2. School PTA – Lara Jacques emailed in March asking on behalf of the PTA if they could submit a S137 application for a new BBQ for the school. As at 13/4 the PC hadn't received the application, but will circulate it as soon as it is received for discussions at the next PC meeting.

25/068 CIL draft charges examination – The PC noted that the PC were invited to take part in person in examination of the CIL draft charges examination. The PC agreed that they had no comment to make.

25/069 Review of financially supported bus services – The PC noted the contracts for the various bus services are up for renewal, and comments are invited from interested parties. The PC unanimously agreed for Cllr G Smith and Cllr P Ward to submit a response on behalf of the PC.

25/070 VE day celebrations – The PC noted that the WI were planning celebrations for VE Day (Thursday 8th May) and were planning to encourage people to take a picnic to the Village Green.

25/071 Minor repairs to St Judes bridge (PW) – The PC unanimously agreed to a proposal of spending £100 on timber, screws and wood hardener to make minor repairs to the bridge.

25/072 Public session for non-Agenda items – None.

25/073 AOB.

The PC noted that a Thames Water representative had agreed to attend the Annual Parish Meeting.
The PC agreed to supply refreshments at the Annual Parish Meeting.
The PC noted that the PC's Emergency Plan was in progress of being updated.

25/074 Date of Next Meeting: 21 May 2025

The meeting closed at 8.38 pm.

RFO Report for March 2025

The income for the month includes parking and vendor income Total Income = £267.00

Payments included Playdale deposit, another seat renovation and the completion of the £1000 grant to the Day Centre. Total Expenditure = £2725.38

Accounts for March

Current Account	£26029.92
Investment Account	£37403.35
BMM Account	£ 0.03
Total	£63433.30

Section Accounts

S19	£1000 - £258.95 = £741.05
S137	£16000 - £15698 = £302
S145	£200- £0 = £200

Final Comments

I have had an initial conversation with the auditor and she has all the information necessary to carry out the audit. The Internal Audit is not just about the Council finances but about its whole Governance and thus much more wide ranging.

Q4 and the Annual Statement have been prepared and are presented to the Council for approval. I have drawn up a draft AGAR statement for the auditor and this will be presented publicly shortly.

After a slightly protracted conversation with HMRC, the VAT returns for the remainder of this financial year have been submitted by post. It has so far not been possible to submit them electronically.

The brought forward figure for this financial year was £70308 which is higher than recommended. The carry forward figure from this year is £63433 which is still slightly higher than recommended but it has enabled us to keep our Precept for next year at the same level as this year.

A new Practitioners' Guide for 2025 has been published and among one of the changes is that small councils, as we are, can carry forward up to 100% of a year's spending. So although no changes will take place for the coming financial year, the forecasts for successive years may change.

There has been some confusion over the threshold limit for contracts when they must comply with Legislation regarding the use of the Contract Finder website. The threshold used to be £25,000 excluding VAT but it is now publicised as £30,000 including VAT, much the same but now including VAT.