Milton-under-Wychwood Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 19th February 2025

at Milton-under-Wychwood Village Hall

Present: Cllr Graham Smith, Chairman
Cllr Rod Blackman
Cllr Jeff Haine
Cllr John Pratt
Cllr Peter Rawlins
Cllr Pat Ward
Vanessa Oliveri, Parish Clerk
Chris Trotman, RFO
County Cllr Liz Leffman
District Cllr Adam Clements
5 members of the public

25/019 Apologies for Absence: had been received from Cllr G Allcock.

25/020 Declaration of Interests: None to report.

25/021 Minutes of the 15th January 2025: Cllr J Haine proposed to approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15th January 2025. Cllr J Pratt seconded the proposal. A unanimous vote was taken of all in favour of the proposal.

25/022 Matters arising from the January meeting:

1. **Ref: Planning Application No: 24/03186/S73 – Highfields, Church Road, MUW**. The Parish Councillors noted that the house to the right appeared to be approximately one metre deeper from the access road to the rear garden wall. The Parish Council recommend to object to this planning application. The Planning Sub-committee members to forward their comments to the Chairman to compile an for the Clerk to notify WODC.
2. **Emergency Plan Update** – The Councillors noted that the Emergency Plan is nearing completion of being updated. This is to be an agenda item for the March PC meeting.

25/023 Public session for all items related to this Agenda: A resident commented that he was pleased to see that Cllr J Haine had joined the PC's Planning Sub-committee but would like to be assured that the members of the Sub-committee would confer and have an agreed position on each planning application before discussing at the PC meeting.

25/024 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 couldn't persuade the relevant WODC personnel to agree to Section 106 funding for the Village Green car park. They cited a technical restriction linked to Sport England and a definition of what constituted acceptable use of the funds. The Chairman responded that the Unilateral Undertaking document which sets out the basis for the S106 funds does not contain any such restriction: it refers to sports and recreation, therefore the PC still feel that this project should be included.
    - Garden Waste – The garden waste bin charge for 2025/26 had been increased by £2.50 per annum.
    - CDC's budget for 2025/26 – had included additional funding for Planning Enforcement Officer roles.
    - High Court Case with Thames Water – It was reported that Thames Water had won a High Court case to secure a £3bn rescue loan.
3. **County Councillor's report**
    - County Council Budget – The County Council had set its budget for 2025/26 which includes an additional £17mn for children's services and an additional £47mn to be put into the budget over the next two years for highway maintenance. Part of the highways budget would include safety measures such as reducing speed limits. It was noted that Shipton-under-Wychwood PC had specifically asked for the speed limit to be reduced

more gradually leading into the village. £3.6mn had been included in the budget for gulley clearance – The County Council had reduced their gulley clearances down to every four years in the past but had now agreed to clear the gullies out annually.

- Each County Cllr had been allocated a priority fund of £10,000.00 over a two-year period – This would be going live in April and the process was an on-line application form.
- County Council Election – The County Council elections are still going ahead as planned on 1/5/2025.
- Unitary Council – The County Council have been asked to provide an outline plan for a Unitary Council. A Unitary Council was planned to happen in 2027/28 with the possibility of delegating some duties to Parish and Town Councils. The County Council will be carrying out a consultation with Parish and Town Councils and the public after 21/03 prior to submitting their outline plan to the Government.
- Transport by 2050 – The County Council were looking into how transport should be developed by 2050. GWR were being consulted on how they want to develop train services on the North Cotswold line. It was noted that more pressure will be put on parking at Charlbury train station following the introduction of resident only parking in the town. GWR are looking into improving the station parking at Kingham.
- A question was raised for the County Cllr, 'When would the speed sign in Upper Milton be moved back to the crossroads as previously requested?' Cllr G Smith has been corresponding with Anthony Kirkwood on this. Cllr L Leffman agreed to pursue this issue and would report back with an update at the next meeting.

25/025 Planning (PW/PR/JH)

1. Ref: 25/00150/HHD 21 High Street MUW – Addition of two rooflights.
   Decision: No objection recommended, all agreed
2. Ref: 25/00025/S73 Parsons House (was Vicarage Field) Church Road MUW - Variation of condition 1 of planning permission 24/01368/S73 to allow changes to site layout including new landscaping plans and provision of detached single bay garage to serve plot 2.
   Decision: No objection recommended, all agreed.
3. Three Parish Councillors and a few members of the public had met with Henry Astor to listen to his proposals for future development of housing, retail and light industrial units on his land.
4. Dashwood House – It was noted that nothing had happened regarding Dashwood House. Cllr Rawlins offered to write a response to WODC's Enforcement Officer regarding this issue. This is to be forwarded to Cllr Smith prior to submitting to WODC.

25/026 RFO report (CT)

1. RFO report- Cllr J Haine proposed and Cllr Rod Blackman seconded the receipt and approval of the RFO report. The PC unanimously approved it.
2. January Summary – Cllr P Rawlins proposed to accept the January 2025 summary. Cllr J Pratt seconded the proposal. A unanimous vote was taken, all in favour.

25/027 Village green

1. Football pitch improvement update (GA) – S106 request submitted on 24 January for funds of £11,520 (to be spent over a six-year period to complement separate funds from the Football Foundation). The PC noted that WODC had acknowledged receipt of the request.
2. Car park re-surfacing and S106 application update (GS) – This had been discussed under item 25/024 District Cllr's Report. Cllr G Smith agreed to pursue other sources of funding.
3. Play equipment safety checks
   a. The PC unanimously approved Playdale expenditure of £420 (incl VAT) to review the zip wire mechanism and examine other Playdale equipment. Cllr P Rawlins agreed to be present when Playdale carry out the inspection.
   b. The PC agreed for a working party to remedy minor play equipment issues in April 2025. Cllr G Smith agreed to circulate a rota to carry out the weekly recreation inspections.

25/028 Grass cutting contract for the cemetery (GA)

1. Cllr G Allcock, Cllr P Rawlins and the RFO had met as agreed and had gone through the grass cutting contract quotations received. A recommendation was put forward to the full PC meeting of awarding the grass cutting contract to Muddy Spades. A unanimous vote was taken of all in favour of awarding the grass cutting contract to Muddy Spades for 2025/26.

25/029 Tree survey (RB)

1. Cllr R Blackman referenced four quotations received to carry out a tree survey of the trees for which the PC is responsible in the village. The PC unanimously approved quotation 'C' at a

cost of £720.00. Cllr R Blackman was to notify the company to proceed with undertaking the tree survey.

25/030 Weed control

1. A quotation had been received to undertake weed control in the village. The PC agreed to defer this item to the March PC agenda, and to obtain an additional quotation from another contractor.

25/031 Biodiversity plan (GS/PW)

1. Hedgerow Heroes update on activities for 2025 – Cllr P Ward advised that the next hedge planting session had been arranged for 1st March 2025. The Church hedge laying had been completed. 850 metres in hedge planted had been completed, with the assistance of Wild Oxfordshire who had supplied the hedging and the Oxfordshire Conservation Volunteers, three Parish Councillors and a number of parishioners who had helped with the planting. Trees will be planted on 13th March 2025 to form the St Judes Community Orchard.
2. Update on potential TOE grant for Sarah's Meadow – A grant application had been submitted in draft, and constructive comments had been received from Rachel Sanderson of TOE, revised draft being prepared for submission by the first week in April.

25/032 Section 137 grants

1. Wychwood Day Centre request for £1,000.00 – In the light of the fact that there is just £1300 of S137 funds remaining for 2024/25 and we may receive further bids in March, Cllr P Rawlins proposed offering half of the S137 funds at £650.00. Cllr J Pratt seconded the proposal. A unanimous vote was taken of all in favour of the proposal put forward. The PC unanimously agreed as this is such a good cause within the community if no further grant requests had been received by the March PC meeting, then the PC would contribute a further £350.00 to bring the total to the £1,000.00 requested.

25/033 Police

1. The police had asked for suggestion on how the police could assist in the community if required? The Councillors agreed to ask for more police presence in the village and at different times of the day/evening.
2. Cllr G Smith and Cllr P Ward had met with a PCSO who had agreed to speak to her inspector and ask if some of their NPR camera funds could be used in the village, potentially along with CCTV. The Clerk was to follow this up when emailing asking for more police presence in the village.

25/034 Sewage leakage to highway and watercourse

1. Cllr J Pratt reported that for two weeks running sewage had been leaking onto the highways by Milton Service Station forecourt. The PC unanimously agreed that a joint letter from the surrounding Parish's was to be sent to Thames Water regarding this on-going issue. The PC noted that the upgrade of the sewerage treatment plant was now due to be completed by August 2026 rather than 2025 as originally planned.

25/035 Public session for non-Agenda items

- Water tap dripping in Church wall. It was reported that several washers had been replaced but still the tap drips. The resident who raised the issue agreed to turn the stop cock off when frosts were predicted, thus preventing the tap from dripping.
- Van left at Village Hall – The police had removed a van which had been left at the Village Hall.
- Skip at the allotments – A request was put forward for a skip to be placed at the allotments. This was noted and would be discussed at the MARC meeting due to be held straight after this meeting.
- NPPF – A question was raised, 'What are the possible implications for Parish Council's within the Neighbourhood Planning Policy Framework which was being set for 2041? The Chairman proposed that this should be an agenda item at the Annual Parish Meeting (APM).

25/036 AOB.

- The PC noted that it was good to see lots of people using the Village Green.
- The APM is to be held in May – date to be confirmed.
- The PC agreed for the Clerk to attend OALC's Experienced Clerk's Refresher course on Tuesday 4th March 2025.

25/037 Date of Next Meeting: 19 March 2025

The meeting closed at 8.42pm.

APPENDIX A

RFO Report for January 2025

Income amounted to two burials and one vendor payment for the quarter. I also received a refund from Cartridge People for using their dedicated substitute cartridges rather than the original makers ones.

Total income = £310.59

Payments were a little higher this month due to the professional Services used in generating a new MSA contract which amounted to £3000. The RFO is now on the pay role so with the Clerk and the Lengthsperson, salaries now amount to £1051.23 this month, and two more seats were renovated to the tune of £866.69

Total payments = £5386.17

The Accounts for January

Current Account	£30694.45
Investment Account	£37403.35
BMM Account	£ 0.03
Total	£68097.83

Section Accounts

S19	£258.95 out of £1000 leaves £741.05
S137	£14698.00 out of £16000 leaves £1302
S145	£0 out of £200 leaves £200

Final comments

1 - As I am now on the payroll, my pay is worked out by our payroll company, CAA, and my pay slip is shared with the Fin Com, as are our other employees, and verified against the council's payment bank statements.

2- Assuming that there are no changes to the approved budget, there will need to be a C/F from this financial year of around £11.300 to break even. The current account total stands around £30,694 at present. This does not include the Investment Account.

3 - April 8th had been offered as Internal Audit date with Internal Audit Yorkshire.