Milton-under-Wychwood Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 21st May 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

25/075 Election of Chairman: Cllr J Haine proposed Cllr G Smith be the Chairman for the Municipal Year 2025/26. Cllr P Ward seconded the proposal, a unanimous vote was taken of all in favour the proposal. Cllr G Smith signed the Declaration of Office.

25/076 Election of Vice-Chairman: Cllr J Haine proposed Cllr G Allcock be the Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2025/26. Cllr G Smith seconded the proposal, a unanimous vote was taken of all in favour of the proposal. Cllr G Allcock was to sign the Declaration of Office.

25/077 Apologies for Absence: were received from Cllr G Allcock.

25/078 Declaration of Interests: None to report.

25/079 Minutes of the 16th April 2025: Cllr J Pratt proposed to approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 16th April 2025. Cllr R Blackman seconded the proposal. A unanimous vote was taken of all in favour of the proposal.

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

25/061 Public session for all items related to this Agenda: None.

25/062 To receive the following reports:

1. **Chairman's report –** Cllr G Smith reported that the APM had been held last week. Presentations had been made by Thames Water, the Chairman from Shipton-under-Wychwood on planning and in the absence of County Cllr L Leffman, Cllr G Smith read out her report. There had been twenty-five members of public in attendance.
2. **District Councillor's report -**
    - Cllr A Clements reported that updates had not been received on the Local Plan yet. The Overview and Scrutiny committee were to go through updates before releasing any information on proposed development sites. It was suggested that there were probably going to be in the region of three hundred and fifty proposed sites in the document.
    - Cllr J Haine raised a concern that the bins of the village green were being emptied into one recycle truck, even though the items had been put into the correct bins. Cllr Clements would look into this and report back.
    - Fly tipping was noted in the lay-by on the Burford Road, between the Merrymouth Inn and the slip road from the bottom of Stow-on-the-Wold hill. Cllr Clements agreed to look into this.

- Cllr J Pratt asked when the next part of the Local Plan consultation would take place? Cllr Clements would look into this and notify Cllr J Pratt.

3. County Councillor's report -

- Cllr L Leffman thanked everyone in the community who had supported her in the May County Council election.
- The road surfacing work had taken place on the Shipton Road, the white lining was still to take place. The road signs would be removed once the white lining had been carried out.
- OCC will now be clearing out gullies in the county once a year instead of every four years.
- Cllr L Leffman has a £5,000.00 budget for this financial year and reminded local organisations and the Parish Council to apply for funding if required.
- Cllr G Smith asked if there had been any progress on moving the 20mph speed sign in the village? Cllr Leffman would follow this up and report back to Cllr G Smith.
- It was noted that a car had been parked on the road when the resurfacing had been undertaken so that part of the road had been missed.

25/063 Planning (PW/PR/JH)

There had been no planning applications for consideration at the meeting. The Council noted that there had been no further correspondence from the owner of Homestead.

25/064 RFO report (CT)

1. RFO report- Cllr P Rawlins proposed and Cllr R Blackman seconded the receipt and approval of the RFO report. The PC unanimously approved it. The PC noted receipt of four new defibrillators for the village. The RFO was to find the best way to dispose of the old defibrillators.
2. April Summary – Cllr P Rawlins proposed and Cllr J Haine seconded receipt and approval of the April Summary. The PC unanimously approved it.

25/065 End of Year Accounts & Annual Governance & Accountability Return for 2024/25

1. Balance sheet on the year end 2024/25 – The PC received and unanimously approved the balance sheet for 2024/25.
2. Annual Internal Audit Report – The PC received and accepted the report with reservations.
3. Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 – Cllr J Pratt proposed to approve Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25. Cllr P Ward seconded the proposal. A unanimous vote was taken of all in favour of the proposal. The Chairman and the Clerk signed and dated Section 1 at the meeting.
4. Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 – Cllr J Pratt proposed to approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25. Cllr J Haine seconded the proposal. A unanimous vote was taken of all in favour of the proposal. The Chairman and the RFO signed and dated Section 2 at the meeting.
5. Notice of Public Rights: The PC approved the dates for inspection of the accounts.

25/066 Village Green

1. Football pitch improvement update – Cllr G Allcock was still following the process to get the grant funding.
2. Car park re-surfacing update and further quote – Cllr G Smith was awaiting an update from the TW contractor on whether or not they can help. The PC approved that an application for grant funding was to be made to Cotswold National Landscape for funds intended to improve access. Cllr J Haine had obtained an additional quote for resurfacing the carpark at a cost of £77,508.00 plus VAT.
3. Play equipment safety checks – Playdale costings for equipment renewal or repair following a visit by their engineer to repair a spring on the zip wire had been supplied and circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Councillors agreed to have a meeting on the Green to discuss the various elements and decide what jobs the Parish Councillors could do and what Playdale need to do. The Councillors agreed to apply for S106 funding for the repair costs when an amount had been defined.
4. Basketball court memorial – The Councillors agreed that the basketball court memorial could remain until the end of August 2025 as long as it was kept in good condition. Cllr G Smith would notify the resident of the PC's decision.
5. The PC noted that weed spraying on the Village green would take place on 1st June and agreed to not cut the grass next week. Cllr Rawlins agreed to contact Muddy Spades to let them know. Muddy Spades were to be asked to cut the football pitch lower, and that it hadn't been cut the last time they were on the Village green.

25/067 Biodiversity plan (GS/PW)

1. Update on potential TOE grant for Sarah's Meadow – A TOE appointed assessor met with GS, PW and Elaine Brittan at Sarah's Meadow to review the grant request. The ecologist indicated he would recommend to TOE that it support the request, but noted that the grant panel will be considering multiple other grant requests.
2. Ecologist walkover survey of Sarah's Meadow – At the same time as the grant review the ecologist also walked over the Meadow and recommended actions the PC should take to improve biodiversity most effectively. He recommends focusing on planting around the pond margins and associated wet lands rather than trying to develop a wild flower meadow. In his view the latter would be a lot of intensive effort for uncertain reward given that the soil is very fertile and therefore not ideal for wild flowers.

25/068 Section 137 grants

1. To consider a S137 grant application received from the Life Centre – Cllr G Smith and Cllr J Pratt met with John Witt, as per our discussion at the April meeting, to see if the request could focus on a specific area or project rather than a general request for monies to defray the 2024 deficit. John Witt agreed to submit another application which was to be circulated before the June PC meeting.
2. To consider a S137 grant application received from Milton Bowls Club – After discussion, Cllr P Rawlins proposed to approve a grant of £500.00, Cllr J Haine seconded the proposal. A unanimous vote was taken of all in favour of the proposal and agreed to not provide the £500.00 until Milton Bowls Club had confirmed that they had obtained all of the funding required.

25/069 Upper Milton 20mph signs

1. To receive an update on Upper Milton 20mph signs – This was discussed under item 25/062 – 3.

25/070 Insurance quotations

The PC noted that insurance quotes were to be sought early June ready for the June PC meeting.

25/071 Review of proposed revised Emergency Plan and its Coordination and plan for its distribution

The latest draft version had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Haine and Cllr Rawlins agreed to discuss the lead coordinator role with Cllr Pratt after the meeting. The Council agreed for the WhatsApp Group to be set up. It was noted that the risk assessment had been adjusted.

25/072 Public session for non-Agenda items

A member of the public stated that the APM had been extremely good but indicated that better publicity was required for next year. The Council confirmed that publicity had been on the PC's website, village noticeboard and also several times on the Wychwood Facebook page.

25/073 AOB

- Tree by 1, Pear Tree Close – A resident had mentioned that the tree by 1, Pear Tree Close was too close to her property and was blocking the light. Cllr Blackman was to raise this with the tree contractor.
- Sub-committees and Cllr responsibilities – An agenda item for the June Parish Council meeting to confirm membership on the sub-committee and Cllr responsibilities.
- Policies – To add to June Parish Council agenda to review the Council's policies.
- Great Big Green Week – The Council noted the Great Big Green Week was planned 7th – 15th June.
- Nature Walk – The Council noted that a Nature Walk had been arranged on 11th June 2025 and planned to walk around the green spaces in the village.
- Wooden Bridge Repair – Cllr Ward notified the PC that the wooden bridge had been repaired by Steve Whitting and Cllr Ward.

25/074 Date of Next Meeting: 18th June 2025

The meeting closed at 8.44pm.

RFO Report for April 2025

Income for the month was very good but as expected. This included the VAT refund from last financial year and the first part of our Precept Total income = £29,113.46

Payments for the month included the election fees, Playdale inspection of the play equipment, timber for the bridge over the brook at St Judes and our quarterly PAYE payments.

Total Payments =£2296.55

Accounts for April

Current Account	£52,846.83
Investment Account	£37,716.00
BMM Account	£ .03
Total	£90,562.86

Section Accounts

S19	£ 1,000.00
S137	£16,000.00
S145	£ 200.00

Final comments

The Draft Audit response has arrived and I have commented on it and return to the auditor. As yet there has been no response from her. Her internal control objective report raised some concerns which will be addressed by the PC

Audit Sections 1 and 2 are now ready for signing and the final stages of the submission to AGAR are being prepared.

The Current account is very healthy at the moment and I will look to transferring some to our Investment Account to gain interest which at the moment stands at 3.08% This has to remain in for 3 months to gain interest.

Although for this month, our Clerk has been looking for funding to replace four of our five defibrillators which, although are still working, are now out of guarantee but without success. These have now been ordered through PC funds but with a substantial discount from the suppliers.

CT
16/05/25