Milton-under-Wychwood Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 20th May 2026

at Milton-under-Wychwood Village Hall

Present: Cllr Graham Smith, Chair
Cllr Alan Allday
Cllr Rod Blackman
Cllr Jeff Haine
Cllr John Pratt
Cllr Peter Rawlins
Cllr Pat Ward
Vanessa Oliveri, Parish Clerk
Chris Trotman, RFO
District Cllr Adam Clements
7 members of the public

26/082 Election of Chairman

Cllr Rawlins proposed Cllr Smith to be the Chairman for 2026/27. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal, all voted in favour.

26/083 Election of Vice-Chairman

No one put themselves forward to be Vice-Chairman for 2026/27.

26/084 Apologies for Absence: County Cllr Liz Leffman had sent apologies and had emailed a report which was circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Smith went through the report at the meeting.

26/085 Declaration of Interests: Cllr Rawlins declared an interest in the Sustainable Wychwood Community Orchard S137 grant application and took no part in the discussion or decision made at the meeting.

26/086 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15th April 2026: Cllr Pratt proposed to approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15th April 2026. Cllr Blackman seconded the proposal. All were in favour.

26/087 Matters arising from the meeting of 15th April 2026: None.

26/088 Public session for all items related to this Agenda: None.

26/089 To receive the following reports:

1. **District Councillor Adam Clements report –**
    - The Executive has been formed and is run by an alliance. Cllr Liz Leffman is now the Executive Member for planning.
    - The 2043 Local Plan is due to be published in the Summer 2026.
2. **County Councillor Liz Leffman's report** In the absence of Cllr Liz Leffman the Chairman read out the report circulated prior to the meeting as follows: -
    - Cllr Liz Leffman has chosen to stand down as Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, but will be in the Cabinet with responsibility for Highways, and also the Executive Member at West Oxfordshire District Council with responsibility for Planning.
    - **Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) and Devolution:** No News on either, the Minister for Devolution has resigned so progress is likely to be delayed. OCC expect to hear from Government in July about the LGR decision.

- **Funding for electric charging points:** OCC has received funding from government for 1500 new charging points across the county, to encourage people without driveways to buy electric cars.
- **Surface dressing:** the programme for surface dressing has begun and a number of roads around the area have been treated including the road from Finstock to Hailey and the road through Crawley. This protects the surface and prevents potholes from forming.
- **Potholes:** are still being filled but we have around 4,000 still to be done. We expect this to be completed by the end of June.
- **Quiet Lanes:** OCC is introducing a pilot scheme for Quiet Lanes, rural lanes which will be primarily designated for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, with minimal or no traffic permitted. Quiet Lanes will only be adopted with the consent of the Parish Council and the County Councillor and where there are alternative routes for cars. OCC are aiming to pilot 10 of these over the next 12 months.

26/090 Planning applications

1.1 Ref: 26/00751/HHD 23 Wychwood Close, MUW - Removal of existing conservatory and garage. Erection of a single storey rear extension, side porch and detached store and home office.

COMMENT: The PC noted that the existing garage is flat roofed. The proposed store and home office are on the ground floor but the ridge height is approximately 4m and appears unusually tall for its purpose and could affect its neighbour. The PC consider that the ridge should be no more than 3m which would adequately provide the required accommodation. The PC object to this part of the applications as it is not in accordance with Local Plan Policies OS2, OS4 and the Neighbourhood Plan Policy CH1.

The PC advise WODC that if the Store and Home office came back with a ridge height of 3m, the PC would recommend it for approval.

1.2 Ref: 26/00822/FUL Dashwood House, Shipton Road, MUW - Proposed change of use of rear commercial space (existing room G9) to form ancillary space in form of domestic kitchen to existing dwelling house.

COMMENT: The PC objects in the strongest possible terms to this application. It is not just a change of use from commercial to domestic but a change in the built form without the benefit of planning permission.

In view of the period of time that has elapsed since this serious breach of planning rules, the Parish Council is disappointed that the District Council has not seen fit to take legal action to get the building restored to its original condition with two shops, a kitchen and toilet facilities. The Parish Council does not accept the applicant's argument that there is no need in the village for commercial accommodation.

The Parish Council considers that this application does not accord to planning policies OS2, E1, E5, BC1, the relevant sections of the Cotswolds National Landscape and Neighbourhood Plan policies F1 facilities for small businesses and Policy F2 retail and local services.

1.3 Ref: 26/00823/HHD The White House, Lyneham Road, MUW - Erection of a replacement carport with first floor studio.

COMMENT: The Parish Council have no objection to this planning application in view of its location it will have no effect on the neighbours.

26/091 Finance

1.1 RFO report- Cllr Pratt proposed to approve the RFO report for April. Cllr Haine seconded the proposal. All were in favour. CT recommended that we await the internal audit report before completing the AGAR return, and then consider the return at the June meeting.

1.2 April summary – Cllr Pratt proposed to approve the April summary. Cllr Haine seconded the proposal. All were in favour.

The PC noted an invoice received from OCC for the 6 monthly payment for library support in the village at a cost of £3,012.00, which will be set against S137 in the PC accounts.

1.3 Information Commissioners Office – The PC considered an annual membership with the ICO at a cost of £52.00. The PC unanimously approved to pay for the ICO annual membership.

1.4 Section 137 grant applications

The PC considered the Section 137 grant applications received. Cllr Haine proposed to approve the amounts listed below. Cllr Rawlins seconded the proposal. All were in favour of the proposal. Cllr Rawlins took no part in the discussion or decision made on 1.4.2.

1.4.1 Wychwood School – Amount approved by PC - £500
1.4.2 Sustainable Wychwoods – Community Orchard – Amount approved by PC - £500
1.4.3 Sustainable Wychwoods - Repair Café – Amount approved by PC - £700
1.4.4 WOCT - Amount of approved by PC - £900
1.4.5 1st Wychwoods Scout Group – Amount approved by PC - £398

26/092 The Annual Parish Meeting on 10 June – The PC confirmed a primary topic for the APM of the 2043 Local Plan to be presented by District Cllr Adam Clements, plus an item on the Community Allotment. Confirmation of exact content with the various speakers are to be agreed. Cllr Allday agreed to arrange snacks and Cllr Smith agreed to arrange the drinks for the APM.

26/093 Village green

1.1 Football pitch improvement update – Cllr Smith has made some progress with the Pitch Power report but needs a call with the Oxfordshire FA representative to finalise the report. Cllr Smith to follow this up later in the week.

1.2 Car park re-surfacing (GS) – To receive an update on funds, gate restoration and signage. The RFO confirmed that all funds have been received as planned for the car park resurfacing.

Quotes to refurbish the metal gates on the entrance to the car park: - An Oxford based company recommended by ODS declined to quote (too far away); a response from the original supplier of the gates is awaited; a metal fabricator from Witney has viewed the gates and a quote is awaited. Cllr Rawlins agreed to forward the details of a fabricator to Cllr Smith to obtain a quotation.

Sign to show who contributes to the cost of the car park re-surfacing: - The Witney based supplier of signage for Sarah's Meadow has recommended a very simple post and sign which would cost about £115 plus VAT. The latest version of the proposed wording for the sign had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Pratt suggested mounting the sign on the side of the pavilion. All Councillors present agreed with this suggestion.

1.3 Play equipment safety checks and remediation – Cllr Rawlins carried out the last play equipment inspection. Cllr Ward was scheduled to carry out the next inspection.
Cllr Rawlins and Cllr Smith agreed to meet and discuss the maintenance required on the recreation equipment and report to the next PC meeting.

1.4 Tree work proposed by Muddy Spades – Muddy Spades has said that the commemorative oak tree in the middle of the Recreation Ground is stressed and needs some work done to put a more extensive wood bark area (8M) around it, erect a fence and improve watering by putting in place some form of irrigation. At our last meeting Cllr Pratt asked what form that irrigation would take (requesting not something visually obtrusive).

The Parish Councillors considered the need for this work and Cllr Rawlins advised that the tree was looking much better and recommended deferring any work for the time being.

26/094 Tree surgery quotes for priorities identified in the tree survey – the tree survey last June identified some medium priority work to be done by June this year. An outline statement of work has been drafted. Cllr Blackman was in the process of obtaining three quotes for the work required. It was

noted that a willow tree was overhanging some play equipment. Cllr Rawlins will ask Muddy Spades for a quote to remove the overhanging branch and if the quote is reasonable the PC gave Cllr Rawlins the authority to ask them to go ahead and do the work, due to the location of the overhanging branch.

26/095 Biodiversity plan (GS/PW)

1.1 Proposal to construct a leaky dam – in conjunction with Philip Watson (who owns Calais Field) it is proposed to instal a leaky dam across Simmonds Brook just downstream of the north eastern boundary corner of Sarah's Meadow. This would have a two-pronged impact. It would help to mitigate flooding where the brook crosses under Shipton Road just by the petrol station, and it would provide a significant wetland area in Sarah's Meadow and Calais Field. Cllr Smith has clarified via the Environment Agency website that we would not need a licence for erecting the dam so long as it conforms to their specifications. Cllr Smith has also applied to OCC for a grant to do the work (mainly excavation and installation of large logs).

1.2 Planting of wild flower seed and plugs – as per the last meeting Cllr Smith and Cllr Ward have planted a range of wildflower plugs and spread wildflower seed in a prepared area at the southern end of Sarah's Meadow.

26/096 TVP grant for a speed indicator and monitoring device - The PC have a received a £4K grant from TVP for one or two devices. They are partly to provide data on the speed of passing vehicles and partly to give drivers feedback on their speed (according to feedback from research and other councils the devices are effective at getting drivers who are speeding to moderate their speed). The data gathered can be used to establish the extent to which drivers are or are not speeding, how many vehicles exceed the limit and by how much. That can then inform whether or not we think we have an issue which warrants addressing.

Cllr Allday and Cllr Smith will elicit quotes for provision of one or more devices.

26/097 Website Accessibility Statement – The Councillors agreed to leave this until September when progressing with the website with Parish Online as this can be included at the same time.

26/098 Great Big Green Week – is in 6-14 June. Sustainable Wychwoods is asking individuals and business to make pledges to do with sustainability, and have provided a list of suggested pledges. For MUW PC Cllr Smith suggests we pledge to plant trees and create wildlife areas, both of which we are already doing and plan to do more of in Sarah's Meadow, and elsewhere as far as planting trees is concerned. The Councillors present unanimously approved Cllr Smith's proposal. Cllr Smith agreed to let Sustainable Wychwoods know.

26/099 Sub-committee and Cllr responsibilities

1.1 The Councillors present unanimously agreed the membership of the Finance sub-committee and the Planning sub-committee (with Clerk and RFO in attendance as required)

- 1.1.1 Finance sub-committee – JP, AA, GS
- 1.1.2 Planning sub-committee – JH, PW and PR
- 1.1.3 Sec 106 – PR, GS and J/H

1.2 Terms of reference - The PC confirmed and approved the sub-committee terms of reference for the following committees as follows: -

- 1.2.1 Finance sub-committee
- 1.2.2 Planning sub-committee
- 1.2.3 S106
- 1.2.4 S137

1.3 The PC confirmed Councillor responsibilities as follows: -

1.3.1 Transport – PW
1.3.2 Village Green – JH, PR
1.3.3 Play equipment/hard play area/seating – PR
1.3.4 PC archives – GS
1.3.5 Sarah's Meadow – PW/GS
1.3.6 Churchyard/Cemetery – RB
1.3.7 Emergency Plan – JH/PR/JP
1.3.8 Village Tree Stock – RB
1.3.9 PC website – Clerk
1.3.10 Sports Club - JH

26/100 Staffing

1.1 Lengthsperson Contract – as per the Confidential Fin Com note of 9 December a revised contract effective from May has been discussed and agreed which provides for a fixed hours contract rather than flexible arrangement. The hours will be 9 per week (in 2025/6 the average hours were 8.5 per week) but the revised contract now also includes St Judes Meadow which previously was not being covered. The PC will enjoy a slight reduction in payroll costs as a result of this change.

1.2 Parish Clerk – The PC noted the resignation of the Parish Clerk and agreed to advertise the vacancy.

26/101 Public session for non-Agenda items – None.

26/102 AOB

- **Blue Badge Sign –** The Council asked the Clerk to contact OCC requesting the blue badge car park bay and sign to be removed from outside No. 102 High Street, Milton-under-Wychwood.
- **Hard Core at the Allotments** – This will be discussed at the MARC meeting.
- **Post missing for the gate at the bottom of the recreation ground** – Cllr Smith and Cllr Rawlins agreed to have a look at this.
- **Sign at Sarah's Meadow** – The Council noted that Glynn Alcock was helping to make signs for Sarah's Meadow. Cllr Smith advised the RFO that bags of Post-Crete would be purchased to fix the signs in place.
- **Footpath in Frog Lane** – The Council noted that Cllr Smith was in communication with OCC regarding turning the current grass verges on the south side at the western end of Frog Lane into a footpath usable by pedestrians in all weathers. The aim is to make it safer for pedestrians to traverse that end of Frog Lane which currently lacks a suitable footpath

26/103 Date of Next Meeting: 17 June 2026

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.