

TILEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 8 April 2025 in the Main Hall, Calcot

Present

- Parish Councillors:** Mr C Taylor (Chairman), Ms J Stewart, Mr A Linden, Mr R Loaring, Mrs P Furlong-King, Mrs R Reynolds, Mrs H Manghnani, Mr J Lally, Mr F Royal (arrived late)
- District Councillors:** Mr C Taylor, Ms J Stewart
- Public:** Two members of the public
- In attendance:** Berkshire Youth - Mrs S Emery, CEO, and Miss J Kirby, youth worker
Miss J Major (Clerk), Miss S Williams (minutes)

Mr Taylor welcomed those present, reminding everyone that the meeting would be recorded for minute-taking purposes.

25/044 Open Forum

- a) Members of the public – there were no comments or questions
- b) Councillors – since the last meeting, Mr Linden had spoken to the Emergency Planning Manager, who would be contacting parish councils in regard to preparing contingencies.

Mr Taylor said he had recently learned that Cara Benda, a former parish councillor, had died two years ago.

Mr Royal joined the meeting during the above item.

- c) Berkshire Youth presentation – Miss Kirby and Mrs Emery gave a presentation on provision of youth work carried out in 2024/25, and Berkshire Youth's planned activity in the parish in 2025/26.

Mrs Emery and Miss Kirby left the meeting.

25/045 Apologies for absence: Apologies had been received from Parish Councillors Mr N Furlong-King, Mrs C Basden, Mr M Powers, Mrs S Vickers, and District Councillors Ms J Lewis and Mr R Somner

25/046 Declarations of interest: None relevant to the agenda

25/047 Approval and adoption of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11 March 2025: The draft minutes had been circulated before the meeting. The minutes were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

25/048 Matters arising: There were no matters arising

25/049 Planning:

- a) Decisions – see Appendix A
- b) New applications – see Appendix B
- c) Eastern Area – the Clerk would advise if there was anything relevant on the agenda of the meeting on 7 May 2025 so that the parish could be represented.

25/050 District Councillors’ report: Mr Taylor and Ms Stewart had submitted a written report before the meeting – see Appendices C and D.

25/051 Clerk’s report: The report had been circulated before the meeting – see Appendix E.

The Clerk said that, although the year-end closedown had been completed, the accounting statements were not yet available. She explained that, as the audit would not have been carried out, it was unlikely the finance paperwork would be ready for sign-off at the May meeting, but it would be brought to the June meeting instead.

That afternoon, the Clerk and some councillors had attended the community engagement on refurbishment of the disused tennis courts at Cotswold Sports Centre. Although she had e-mailed WBC earlier in the day to request plans, none had been received but she had managed to bring a plan which was available for all to see. Full plans and schedule were expected.

Following discussion about the proposed layout and lack of any markings other than for football, it was agreed that the Clerk should contact WBC to ask for clarification of what sports, other than football, would be available on the new surface.

25/052 Changes to the number 15 bus route: Mrs Furlong-King gave a verbal update on progress explaining that, a few days after the last meeting, she had met with Reading Borough Councillor John Ennis. Both he and Olivia Bailey MP had written to the CEO of Reading Buses. Ms Bailey had also spoken in Parliament, specifically citing the number 15 bus, and government funding of £2.4 million was to be made to improve bus services in Reading.

Mrs Furlong-King would arrange a further meeting with Robert Williams, CEO of Reading Buses.

25/053 Proposed local government reorganisation: Mr Taylor explained that West Berkshire Council had proposed merging with South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Councils to form a new, larger unitary authority, provisionally to be named “Ridgeway Council”. Shortly after the announcement, Reading Borough Council had put forward the suggestion that some parishes to the east of West Berkshire should merge with Reading. Other areas to the east of Reading would also merge to form a “Greater Reading Council”.

25/054 Resolutions

25/054-1 Membership of the Communications working group: This item had been deferred from a previous meeting. Ms Stewart explained that the two main objectives of the working group were to produce a newsletter to be delivered to all households in the parish, and to establish a social media presence.

Current members of the working group were Ms Stewart, who chaired it, Mr Loaring and Mr Taylor, and all were happy to continue.

After discussion, it was agreed that Mr Royal and Mr Lally would join the Communications working group. Ms Stewart would contact Mr Powers to find out whether he was still interested in joining the group.

Mrs Manghnani left the meeting.

25/054-2 Councillor contact with Berkshire Youth: Mr Taylor explained that the Clerk had suggested he be replaced as the Parish Council's named contact with Berkshire Youth, although he would continue as a volunteer.

After lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the parish council members of the Youth and Community Safety working group – ie Mr Taylor, Mr Royal, Mrs Manghnani, and Mrs Vickers – would meet with the Clerk to discuss the issues and seek ways to resolve them.

25/054-3 Berkshire Youth 2025/26 Partnership Agreement: A report had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that as no contract and no costings had yet been received from Berkshire Youth, this item would have to be deferred. It was agreed to bring this item to the next meeting.

25/54-4 Fire Risk and Legionella assessments: A quote had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk confirmed that the FRA quote received was in line with expectations and the cost of the FRA in the Jubilee Annexe. She gave some background, explaining it had proven difficult to obtain any quotes, but it would be very good to have the assessments carried out as soon as possible.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed that the quote should be accepted and the contractor, Firntec, should be engaged to carry out Fire Risk Assessments at all halls except the Jubilee Annexe, and Legionella Assessments at all halls. The total cost would be £1,768.74 plus VAT.

25/054-5 Westwood Farm Community Association Easter Farm: A report had been circulated before the meeting and the Clerk gave some further background.

It was unanimously agreed to permit Westwood Farm Community Association to hold its Easter Farm at Cotswold recreation ground on Sunday 20 April, subject to the usual conditions.

25/055 Chairman's remarks: Mr Taylor explained that he was thinking of standing down as chairman, although he would continue as a parish councillor. He invited all other councillors to consider taking on the role.

The meeting finished at 9.40pm

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 13 May 2025

Chairman

Appendix A – Decisions

24/02132/FULMAJ	<u>Pincents Manor Hotel, Pincents Lane, Tilehurst</u> Section 73: Variation of Condition 13 (licence issued by Natural England) of planning permission 21/03217/FULMAJ: Convert the redundant former Pincents Manor Hotel (Use Class C1) into 50 extra care (Use Class C2) apartments for the elderly with associated extensive communal facilities and landscaping. Works include demolition of the existing non-listed conference facility, hotel annexe and outbuildings	Granted
24/02791/HOUSE	<u>32 Fairway Avenue, Tilehurst</u> Double storey side and rear extension and porch added	Granted
25/00026/HOUSE	<u>7 Blackthorn Close, Tilehurst</u> Proposed single storey side extension and new flat roof and cladding to existing conservatory	Granted
24/02226/HOUSE	<u>14 High View, Calcot</u> Proposed single storey side and rear extension to replace existing lean-to and garage and widened access and extended drop kerb	Granted
24/02325/HOUSE	<u>17 Vicarage Wood Way, Tilehurst</u> Installation of Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP)	Granted
25/00266/HOUSE	<u>1 Maybough Cottage, Dark Lane, Tilehurst</u> Single storey rear extension	Granted
25/00242/HOUSE	<u>24 The Birchwoods, Tilehurst</u> Conversion of existing double garage building to habitable accommodation with the addition of brickwork and windows to the front elevation, front and rear extensions and the addition of a pitched roof	Granted
25/00585/NONMAT	<u>52 Oliver Drive, Calcot</u> Non material amendment to planning permission 22/00919/HOUSE: rear extension. Amendment: porch amendment <i>Note: This application was not sent to the Parish Council for comment.</i>	Refused
25/00272/HOUSE	<u>14 The Ridings, Tilehurst</u> Single storey rear extension and conversion of garage to habitable room	Granted

Appendix B – New Planning applications

The following application was circulated and comments agreed by e-mail were submitted before the meeting.

25/00481/HOUSE 172 Long Lane, Tilehurst
Section 73a: Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) of previously approved application 24/00337/HOUSE – construction of new two-bay time frame carport structure to front driveway area

This Council has no objections to the proposal

The following applications are for consideration at the meeting on Tuesday 8 April.

25/00443/HOUSE 29 Sheraton Drive, Tilehurst
Single storey rear and side extension

This Council has no objections to the proposal

25/00538/HOUSE 167 Hall Road, Tilehurst
Alterations to provide two ground floor front windows, alterations to roof to provide overhang to enclose porch, new chimney and alterations from flat to pitched roof at rear (retrospective)

This Council has no objections to the proposal

25/00558/HOUSE 143 Warborough Avenue, Tilehurst
Extend existing dropped kerb

This Council has no objections to the proposal

25/00528/HOUSE 162 Cotswold Way, Tilehurst
Proposed single storey rear extension to replace existing conservatory

This Council has no objections to the proposal

25/00539/HOUSE 38 Longworth Avenue, Tilehurst
Proposed single storey front and rear extensions

This Council has no objections to the proposal

25/00504/HOUSE 18 Vicarage Wood Way, Tilehurst
Retrospective single storey rear extension

This Council has no objections to the proposal

25/00616/HOUSE 61 Hildens Drive, Tilehurst
Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension

This Council objects to the proposal and agrees with Highways that a parking plan is required as a four-bed house requires three off-road spaces

25/00586/HOUSE

58 Fullbrook Crescent, Tilehurst

Demolition of existing 2.07m² UPVC porch and 11.76m² concrete garage (total c 13.83m²). Construction of a 3m² brick porch, integrated with the house to extend the entrance hall. The garage will be rebuilt as a bedroom and small bathroom, extended 1.4m forward. The new porch and extended garage will be linked across the front with matching brick walls, a pitched tiled roof over the porch and front of the bedroom, and a flat roof over the bedroom and bathroom. Total rebuild area c 18.2m². Footprint increase c 4.4m². Driveway retains space for two cars per WBC guidelines

This Council has no objections to the proposal

25/00140/FUL

Land adjacent to Linnet Close, Tilehurst

Proposal: Erection of 4 no. residential dwellings comprising 4 x 2 bedroom semi-detached houses including 2 no. parking spaces per dwelling and private gardens. Creation of new vehicular access from City Road. Provision of accessible green space to rear of site

This Council objects to the proposal as the suggested new site access is immediately opposite a road junction. Other previous comments still stand

Appendix C – Mr C Taylor's District Councillor's report

At the full council meeting in March, one item of business was to approve the Hungerford Neighbourhood Development Plan proceeding to reg 16 consultation. It has taken seven years to reach this stage and should go to referendum later this year. I spoke in the debate, congratulating Hungerford on the good work. It looks a very well presented and structured plan to me, and I would recommend all parish councillors read it.

I attended planning site inspections for Eastern Area Planning (Thatcham Memorial Park footpath changes), the Standing Advisory Group for Religious Education, the Children's Mental Health Task Group and an Extraordinary Licensing committee to approve consultation on a new taxi/private hire policy document.

Still no report back from the Planning Inspector on the Local Plan and proposed new site allocations including Pincents Hill. Town/U+I have, however, commenced borehole drilling on site to check for any contamination.

A public meeting I chaired at Springfield School to consult with residents and parents on the forthcoming School Streets scheme was well attended, particularly by residents. The scheme will close Barton Road and roads off it for an hour at school opening/closing times except for residents and some permit holders. Concerns were raised over qualification for permits, impact on City Road and side roads, the pub car park, etc. Alternative parking areas need to be resolved.

I intervened to resolve a longstanding street light outage on Hildens Drive and Longworth Avenue, contacting the energy contractor directly rather than via WBC. Most of the lighting was restored the following day and a return visit was quickly arranged to fix three lights.

The ever-increasing fly tipping at Garston Crescent/Poppy Way garages has reached at least partial resolution with access fenced off and locked, and the landowner transferring fly tipped items into a skip. A longer term solution still needs to be found.

I opened new case relating to roadway repairs, reducing risk of garden flooding on Wellfield Close, and repairs to enable vehicles to turn around safely on Pincents Lane.

I have just seen a reply from WBC Planning to our Steering Group Chairman's letter regarding NDP support. I will report on this separately.

I have spoken with staff at Greenfield House (next to the Calcot Centre, Tilehurst Parish Council is the building landlord) who remain very concerned at potential changes at this and two other social day centres in West Berks. I urge parish councillors to support the UNISON petition to keep these centres open and I will be working actively with others to secure this outcome.

I am working with members of the minority group to see if we can agree a joint approach relating to three-weekly black bin collections and ways to change this to make it easier for residents and more cost effective.

And finally, it was great to hear that Olivia Bailey MP had raised a question in parliament regarding removal of the number 15 Reading Bus route through Calcot, which Tilehurst Parish Council opposed from the initial consultation last year. Full credit to Pippa for her outstanding campaigning on this issue.

Appendix D – Ms J Stewart's District Councillor's report

Council met on 27 March to discuss: Hungerford Neighbourhood Development Plan; Statutory Pay Policy 2025/26; Constitutional Changes; Member Development Programme; and Leaders Update on Membership of Executive. Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found online.

There was no meeting of Council this month. The next meeting is on 1 May (Extraordinary Meeting).

Executive met on 19 March to discuss: Replacement Finance System Direct Award; Ridgeway Council. Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found online.

There was no meeting of the Executive this month. The next meeting is on 3 April.

Devolution

Ridgeway Council

An initial proposal to merge West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Councils into a new unitary authority has been submitted. At their March Executive and Cabinet meetings, members from all three councils supported submission of the proposal, which is being developed under the title 'Ridgeway Council' after the 5,000-year-old trail which travels the three areas. The move is in response to a government announcement in December 2024 to end two-tier. As part of the shake-up, the government also indicated all unitary authorities will need to serve around 500,000 residents or more, which will require WBC - which covers around 170,000 people - to merge with neighbouring councils. The deadline for final submissions is 28 November 2025. In the meantime, the councils will continue to develop proposals along with a programme of communication and engagement to ensure local voices and community needs are reflected in the proposal.

The Leader of Reading Borough Council, and the MP for Reading West and Mid Berkshire, have expressed the view that eastern parts of West Berkshire should be moved to Reading. The government is yet to publish its response to the proposal, which should be released soon.

Culture

3G pitch coming to Cotswold Sports Centre

A 3G artificial playing pitch will be installed at the Cotswold Sports Centre, Tilehurst. Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the project will redevelop the multi-sport courts behind the centre. The development will include a 3G surface with suitable fencing and goals to be primarily used for football, although the space will be available for residents to book and use for a range of sports.

The new pitch will be the same size as the existing courts, allowing for small-sided match play and will be used for a mix of social and formal sport for local clubs and teams to book as a training space, but also for parties and activities. As part of the sports centre offering, Everyone Active will run an exciting and varied programme at the facility, on behalf of West Berkshire Council. Work starts in Spring for completion early Summer.

Goodbye to the Mobile Library

There has been a mobile library service in the district for at least 40 years and, at the height of its popularity there were three library vehicles. Due to diminishing numbers of customers and the fact that the one remaining vehicle had reached the end of its working life, the Mobile Library ceased at the end of March 2025.

Although the Mobile Library will be missed, West Berkshire Libraries will continue to find ways to bring books to those who can't get to the library and to serve customers in rural and isolated areas:

- At Home Library Service is for residents who find it difficult to visit their local library. WBC will bring the service to them and will match each person with a DBS-checked library volunteer who will find out their reading tastes, then choose and deliver books to their every three weeks. Please ring 01635 519827 or email library@westberks.gov.uk to find out more.
- WBC is also working with town and parish councils to set up regular pop-up libraries and community bookshelves, according to local need; this can link in with existing events such as village hall coffee mornings and community cafes. Pre-ordered book reservations can be dropped off to residents at these locations at a time to suit the local community.

Current Consultations

- [Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group \(DIG\): Residents' Survey 2025](#) – Closes 16 April 2025
- [Proposal to introduce a new Public Spaces Protection Order \(PSPO\) in Pangbourne Meadows](#) – Closes 30 April 2025
- [Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2025-2030](#) – 18 May 2025
- [Springfield Primary School - School Streets Scheme](#) – Closes 18 May 2025

Parish Matters

Litter Picking

Tilehurst Litter Pickers held another successful event on Saturday 5 April towards the end of the Great British Spring Clean week and removed 17 bags of litter from around the Little Heath Road and Turnhams Farm area. In particular, litter is still a real problem around the school and on the field so Cllr Stewart will be writing to the school on this.

Hildens Drive car park is also looking quite untidy and littered with rubbish at the moment so this may be the focus of another pick very soon.

Thames Water

Cllr Stewart has been speaking to and supporting a household in Foxcombe Drive with their concerns about letters received from Thames Water.

Appendix E – Clerk’s report

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report provides information about activities undertaken by the Clerk and other team members and gives updates on matters of relevance to the Council.

2.0 Activity updates

- 2.1 On Wednesday 19 March, the Clerk met with a second loss adjuster in regard to the damage caused to the wall of the Main Hall kitchen in Calcot.

3.0 Audit and Financial

- 3.1 Mrs Manghnani and the Clerk met on Monday 31 March for their first Internal Control Audit. The session focused on the Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Risk Management, Annual Budget Setting and precept demand. The interim report will be circulated along with the Internal Auditor’s final report for 2024/25, at the June Full Council meeting.
- 3.2 The Clerk and the Council’s accountant, Derek Kemp, will carry out the 2024/25 financial year-end closedown on Monday 7 April.

4.0 Other matters

- 4.1 On Monday 10 March, the Clerk and Mr Taylor attended the second Stoneham Grove Community Engagement event organised by Thames Valley Police. The session focused on illegal use of e-scooters and e-bikes and the powers held to tackle this growing problem.
- 4.2 The Clerk attended two one-hour webinars focusing on proposed amendments to the Employment Rights Bill and the impact these changes may have on the Council.
- 4.3 Mrs Reynolds, Mrs Vickers and the Clerk met to review the Leases for the Cotswold Sports Centre, overflow car park and tennis courts, and suggested changes were discussed with the parish’s legal advisor. The proposed changes formed the basis of discussions between Mr Taylor, the Clerk and a West Berkshire Council representative later in the week.
- 4.5 The Clerk received notification of this year’s Cotswold Sports Centre Recharge. The level of the charges has been queried with West Berkshire Council and a meeting has been requested to discuss this further.

- 5.0 **Priorities for May 2025** – this item gives information on upcoming priorities of the Clerk and officers over the coming month(s).
- 5.1 **Finances and year end**
- Processing financial year end closedown
 - Preparing, verifying and signing off year-end payroll and pension declarations
 - Completing pension auto enrolment declaration and compliance
 - Completing the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) ready for formal sign-off
 - Preparing for the Final Internal Audit
 - Drafting the Annual Report
 - Preparing for the Annual Full Council Meeting, including election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council
 - Drafting External Audit documentation ready for submission by Tuesday 1 July
 - Updating the asset register and listing acquisitions and disposals in 2024/25
- 5.2 **Cotswold Sports Centre**
- Reviewing Leases for the sports centre, car park and tennis courts
 - Reviewing the supplemental agreement which forms the basis of the Parish's contribution towards the running and maintenance of the sports centre
- 5.3 **Berkshire Youth**
- Working with Berkshire Youth to agree final costings for the 2024-25 Partnership Agreement
 - Working with Berkshire Youth to agree costings for the 2025-26 Partnership Agreement before circulating to the Parish Council for resolution
 - Writing the final report for Greenham Trust on how funding received had been used for youth work in the parish. Although Berkshire Youth is still very slow to provide any information and no updates have been received for a month or two, it is hoped that the work will be completed by the end of May, and the report can be submitted soon after
- 5.4 **Arranging a Staffing Committee meeting to finalise the facilities assistant job description so that the vacancy can be advertised**
- 5.5 **Progressing repairs to the external wall of the Main Hall kitchen**
- 5.6 **Investigating the possibility of installing fire alarms at other halls. Fire risk assessments (FRAs) are being arranged**
- 5.7 **Obtaining quotations for electrical inspections of all halls**
- 6.0 **Further reports**
- 6.1 **The Clerk will provide further updates at the meeting as necessary.**
- 6.2 **Members are asked to note this report.**