

TILEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 13 May 2025 in the Main Hall, Calcot

Present

- Parish Councillors:** Mr C Taylor (Chairman), Ms J Stewart, Mr A Linden, Mrs S Vickers, Mrs P Furlong-King, Mrs H Manghnani, Mr J Lally (part), Mrs C Basden, Mrs R Braine, Mr F Royal (arrived late)
- District Councillors:** Mr C Taylor, Ms J Stewart, Ms J Lewis
- Public:** Two members of the public
- In attendance:** Miss J Major (Clerk), Miss S Williams (minutes)

Mr Taylor welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Council Meeting, and reminded them that the meeting would be recorded for minute-taking purposes.

25/056 Election of Parish Council Chairman

- a) Mrs Vickers nominated and Mrs Basden seconded that Mr Taylor be elected Parish Council Chairman. There were no other nominations, and the proposal was agreed unanimously
- b) Mr Taylor accepted the position and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Clerk

Mr Royal arrived.

25/057 Election of Parish Council Vice Chairman

- a) Mrs Vickers nominated and Mrs Furlong-King seconded that Ms Stewart be elected Parish Council Vice Chairman. There were no other nominations, and the proposal was agreed unanimously
- b) Ms Stewart accepted the position and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Clerk

25/058 Open Forum

- a) Members of the public – there were no comments or questions
- b) Councillors – there were no comments or questions

25/059 Apologies for absence: Apologies had been received from Parish Councillors Mr N Furlong-King, Mrs R Reynolds, and Mr R Loaring

25/060 Declarations of interest:

Mrs Furlong-King declared an interest in respect of item 25/069-10

25/061 Approval and adoption of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on

8 April 2025: The draft minutes had been circulated before the meeting. The minutes were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

25/062 Matters arising: There were no matters arising

25/063 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 4 June 2025 so that the parish could be represented.

25/064 District Councillors' report: Mr Taylor had submitted a written report before the meeting – see Appendix C.

Ms Lewis said she'd attended the District Parish Conference. There had been about 30 people present, with other attending remotely, and there had been discussions on various subjects, including safe places, community hubs and devolution.

She reminded everyone that the deadline for completing the local transport plan consultation was Sunday 25 May.

Ms Stewart felt that Mr Taylor's report had covered most things, but said that she'd recently met Melanie O'Rourke, the new Service Director for Adult Social Care.

25/065 Clerk's report: The report had been circulated before the meeting – see Appendix D.

The date work would start to replace the surface at Cotswold had been moved back from Monday 12 May to Monday 9 June. Work was expected to take around two weeks.

The Clerk was currently in discussions to see if a community hub could be arranged as part of West Berks Foodbank's regular Monday sessions in the Jubilee Annexe.

The Staffing Committee was aware that one of the maintenance officers was due to have surgery at the end of May. He would be off for some weeks and the other maintenance officer would be on holiday for part of that time, so the Clerk was making arrangements for cover.

Before the meeting, the Clerk had circulated a request from WBC for a two-month extension to the deadline of 24 June for agreeing the leases for Cotswold Sports Centre. The Clerk had received enough responses to agree the request, and would contact the legal adviser to instruct them to confirm the extension.

In response to a query from Mr Linden, the Clerk confirmed that options for making future newsletters available to those without access to the internet would be explored.

25/066 Maintenance report: The report had been circulated before the meeting.

Mrs Basden asked if there were plans to resurface the car park at Turnhams Farm Hall. The Clerk explained that this was on the project list but, until WBC resurfaced the area it owned between the road and the gate to the car park, there would be little point going ahead with the work. Mrs Basden agreed that the worst pot holes and risks were outside the gate.

25/067 Changes to the number 15 bus route: Mrs Furlong-King gave a verbal update explaining that there had been little progress as she had not yet been able to arrange a meeting with Olivia Bailey MP, Reading Borough Councillor John Ennis, Robert Williams, CEO of Reading Buses, and Stuart Gourley, WBC's Executive Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways. She was, however, continuing to work on this.

The Clerk said that the change to the number 15 bus route was impacting on hire of the halls at Calcot. Two groups (one of which had been using the hall at Calcot for very many years) were already considering whether to move as some of their elderly members found it too far to walk from bus stops on the Bath Road.

25/068 West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 – Inspector's report: The report had been circulated before the meeting and Mr Taylor gave some further background, saying it was disappointing that the plan would still include the Pincents Hill site and changes to the settlement boundary.

He explained that a WBC meeting to consider the report had been arranged for Tuesday 10 June, which clashed with the next scheduled Parish Council meeting. It was agreed that the Clerk would look into rearranging the next meeting for another day.

25/069 Resolutions

25/069-1 Bus shelter at Sainsbury's Calcot: The Clerk explained that she had been informed that Reading Buses had said it might be prepared to take on maintenance and cleaning of a new bus shelter installed by WBC.

It was unanimously agreed that this item should be deferred until Reading Buses's decision was known.

25/069-2 Regular direct debit/standing order payments: A report had been distributed before the meeting.

The list of regular direct debit/standing order payments was unanimously approved.

25/069-3 Investment Strategy for 2025/26: The document had been circulated before the meeting.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed to adopt the Investment Strategy for 2025/26.

25/069-4 Staffing Committee: The Clerk explained that the Staffing Committee needed a minimum of four members, and the Parish Council Chairman was automatically an ex officio member. Mrs Reynolds, Mr Taylor, Ms Stewart, and Mrs Vickers were existing members and all were happy to continue on the committee.

It was unanimously agreed that membership of the Staffing Committee for 2025/26 would be Mrs Reynolds, Mr Taylor, Ms Stewart and Mrs Vickers.

It was unanimously agreed that Mrs Vickers be elected Chairman of the committee.

25/069-5 Representation on outside bodies, working groups and steering groups: A report had been circulated before the meeting.

- a) Outside bodies: it was noted that Mrs Manghnani was the Parish Council's nominated Trustee for Tilehurst People's Local Charity (also known as Tilehurst Poor's Land Charity), the term of which is four years.
- b) Working groups: new representatives could be added to working groups throughout the year if necessary.

- (i) Youth and Community Safety (YCS): Mr Taylor explained that meetings were held in the evening via Teams, and that representatives from Thames Valley Police and Berkshire Youth usually attended.

Membership of the YCS working group was unanimously agreed to be Mr Taylor (Chairman), Mrs Vickers, Mrs Manghnani, and Mr Royal

- (ii) Communications: Mr Taylor gave some background and explained the aims of the group.

Membership of the Communications working group was unanimously agreed to be Ms Stewart (Chairman), Mr Taylor, Mr Loaring, Mr Royal, and Mr Lally

- c) Steering groups: there was only one, the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) steering group but the NDP was currently on hold pending the outcome of the Local Plan Review. The group's chairman had resigned and it was not yet known if other members would continue on the steering group should the NDP proceed.

It was agreed that membership of the NDP steering group should be decided as and when it was known whether the project would proceed.

25/069-6 Berkshire Association of Local Councils (BALC) subscription for 2025/26: A report had been circulated before the meeting. It was unanimously agreed that the BALC subscription should be renewed at a cost of £2,247.96.

The Clerk encouraged councillors to attend training courses as it was likely to be the last year they were offered for free to BALC members.

25/069-7 Councillor contact with Berkshire Youth: The Clerk explained that it would be very helpful to have a councillor to help with the interactions with Berkshire Youth.

It was unanimously agreed that Mrs Vickers and Ms Stewart would take on this role.

25/069-8 Berkshire Youth 2025/26 Partnership Agreement: Ms Stewart explained that she had been supporting the Clerk in trying to progress this matter. An agreement had been drafted by Parish Council staff, reviewed by councillors and sent to Sarah Emery, CEO of Berkshire Youth. She had not responded until Ms Stewart had followed up, but she had finally come back with suggested amendments and changes. Further information from Berkshire Youth was still awaited.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed that the Clerk, Ms Stewart and Mrs Vickers would continue to work with Berkshire Youth to agree the costings and finalise the 2025/26 Partnership Agreement. The Clerk was given delegated authority to sign the final agreement, which would be presented to the next meeting for ratification.

Mr Lally left the meeting.

25/069-9 Devolution of services from West Berkshire Council: It was agreed that the issue of devolution was too much to include at a Parish Council meeting, so a working group would be set up to consider the issues and to present recommendations to a future meeting.

The working group would comprise Mr Linden, Mrs Manghnani, the Clerk and an admin officer. Mrs Basden and Mrs Vickers would be sent information to review by e-mail. The working group would bring recommendations to the June or July Parish Council meeting.

25/069-10 Councillor absence: Mr Taylor gave some background, and it was unanimously agreed to approve a further six-month absence for Councillor N Furlong-King in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Section 85(1)(2).

25/069-11 Temporary Internal Control Auditor: Mr Taylor explained that Mrs Manghnani's appointment as temporary cover would need to be extended until Mr Furlong-King's return.

It was unanimously agreed to extend the appointment of Mrs Manghnani as temporary Internal Control Auditor for another six months.

25/070 Review of financial position and payments for March and April 2025: The information had been circulated before the meeting and was noted.

25/071 Chairman's remarks: Mr Taylor explained that he had been going to discuss the clash of meetings on 10 June. As that had already been addressed, he thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting finished at 9.05pm

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 10 June 2025

Chairman

Appendix A – Decisions

25/00055/HOUSE	<u>5 Withy Close, Tilehurst</u> Proposed first floor extension and garage conversion	Granted
25/00299/HOUSE	<u>9 Cowslip Close, Tilehurst</u> Proposed single storey front extension and rear rooflight	Granted
25/00443/HOUSE	<u>29 Sheraton Drive, Tilehurst</u> Single storey rear and side extension	Granted
25/00374/HOUSE	<u>1 Yew Tree Rise, Calcot</u> Proposed single storey rear and side extensions	Granted
25/00558/HOUSE	<u>143 Warborough Avenue, Tilehurst</u> Extend existing drop kerb	Granted
25/00528/HOUSE	<u>162 Cotswold Way, Tilehurst</u> Proposed single storey rear extension to replace existing conservatory	Granted
25/00311/HOUSE	<u>26 Compton Avenue, Tilehurst</u> Single storey rear extension and front porch extension with associated changes to fenestrations	Granted
25/00481/HOUSE	<u>172 Long Lane, Tilehurst</u> Section 73a: Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) of previously approved application 24/00337/HOUSE – Construction of new two-bay timber frame carport structure to front driveway (retrospective)	Granted

Appendix B – New Planning applications

25/00684/HOUSE 56 Fairford Road, Tilehurst
Single storey side extension

This Council has no objections to the proposal

25/00743/HOUSE 69 Little Heath Road, Tilehurst
Extension to existing garden room and conversion to annexe
ancillary to the use of the main building

This Council has no objections to the proposal

25/00833/HOUSE 96 City Road, Tilehurst
Single storey rear extension with side extension for new garage
after demolition of existing garage

This Council has no objections to the proposal

25/00706/HOUSE The Paddocks, Childrey Way, Tilehurst
Proposed 3m side extension with internal alterations

This Council has no objections to the proposal

25/00868/HOUSE 39 Compton Avenue, Tilehurst
Second storey side extension

This Council objects to the proposal and supports comments from Highways about an additional parking space being required

25/00896/HOUSE 16 Lucey Close, Tilehurst
Loft conversion consisting of two small, pitched roof dormers to
rear elevation and two rooflights to front elevation to form one
habitable room with ensuite bathroom

This Council objects to the proposal as it needs to meet West Berkshire Council's design standards. Additionally, comments from Highways are supported – the parking situation is not clear and the increase in bedrooms requires three off-road parking spaces

25/00916/HOUSE 284 Overdown Road, Tilehurst
Proposed single storey front extension with canopy roof

This Council has no objections to the proposal

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

I attended the Extraordinary Council Meeting to approve appointment of the new Chief Executive, Joseph Holmes, who had been Acting Chief Exec for several months and was confirmed overwhelmingly (2 abstentions I believe, I voted in favour. Leaders of all political groups spoke favouring Joseph.

I attended Eastern Area Planning and voted against conversion of an office unit on Theale High Street to a hot food takeaway. I shared road safety concerns and that another takeaway (at least 7 others) would impact the retail balance on the High Street, though the application was approved.

I attended a meeting of the Children's Mental Health Task Force which had largely emerged from Berkshire Youth's 2023 West Berks wide youth survey (partly based on the Tilehurst youth survey). This was the final formal meeting of the task group which will now report back recommendations to the council's Scrutiny Committee. I will provide further feedback on this once final recommendations are published.

I attended the West Berkshire Parish Conference with Cllr Royal making comments on local government reorganisation and devolution of services.

I attended meetings with UNISON and more recently with staff at Greenfield House and Olivia Bailey MP to discuss potential closure or transfer of social day care centres to alternative providers which continues to cause great concern to service users, their families and WBC employees who run the centres. I will continue to work to keep these centres open. It is not too late to sign the UNISON petition, let me know if you want a link to it.

I have coordinated further surveying of Garstons Park residents, and we are making progress in achieving the required level of support to form a residents' association. I would like to thank Cllr Stewart, Olivia Bailey MP and her office, Garstons Park residents and those who volunteered to door-knock for their support in this long-running initiative.

The Planning Inspector has issued his long-awaited report on the Local Plan. It still includes the Pincents Hill site in the plan, along with the other, additional sites the inspector had previously called for. The plan will now go to a full council meeting on 10 June, when WBC will have to decide whether or not to adopt it. I currently await WBC's recommendations.

Road repairs in last month's report have been completed but I view those in Pincents Lane as inadequate and will escalate.

WBC is restructuring some of its committees and I have agreed to join the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Parenting Panel, both of which should be approved by WBC later this week.

I attended Calcot Schools budget approval meeting as a school governor and continue to chase WBC officers on when the school rebuilding programme will start (no progress to date).

I am aware of concern at the prospect of black bin collections moving to 3-weekly later this year. I would welcome comments and have been discussing with other councillors.

The safer schools scheme at Springfield School commences on 2 June. I am concerned at the prospect of congestion on City Road and lack of alternative parking provision. I await with some anxiety!

I continue to pursue at least 6 active individual cases, some with third party support, eg Citizens Advice and Labour Party Case workers.

Appendix D – 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 The Annual Parish Report will be finalised as soon as possible. As agreed with the Communications working group, once that has been completed, officers will work on producing a Parish Newsletter. The idea is that the first issue will be printed and delivered to all households in the parish, and that all future copies will be issued electronically. The intention is to produce the first issue over the summer.
- 2.2 Work to replace the safety flooring in the play area at Cotswold recreation ground is due to start week commencing 12 May 2025. It is likely that the play area will be closed for two weeks whilst work is carried out, reopening in time for the school half term break at the end of May. Notices have been displayed advising of the closure.
- 2.3 West Berkshire Council recently contacted the Clerk seeking permission to extend the existing footpath, leading to the unused tennis courts, to create a ramp to make the new facility fully accessible. Following discussion with both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, permission was given.
- 2.4 The contractor who installed Big Rig and outdoor gym equipment at the Calcot recreation ground returned to carry out some remedial work, as requested by the Clerk. The RoSPA post installation report had been received so the contractor was also able to tighten some fixings which had come loose.
- 2.5 The Clerk continues to work with Berkshire Youth on reconciling the costs under the 2024/25 Partnership. The second/final payment will be made once agreement is reached.

The draft Partnership Agreement for 2025-26, as approved by the Parish Council, was sent to Berkshire Youth on Friday 25 April. As yet no response or comments have been received.

An Admin Officer has contacted Berkshire Youth to ask for the outstanding information needed for the final Greenham Trust funding report. So far, minimal information has been received for 2025. It is hoped that we will be able to send the report very soon after the work’s expected completion at the end of May.

- 2.6 The Clerk continues to liaise with the solicitors over the leases for the Cotswold Sports Centre, and is currently awaiting responses on legal aspects. The deadline for completing this is Tuesday 24 June.

3.0 **Audit and Financial**

- 3.1 The first instalment of £168,356.00 relating to the parish precept has been received from West Berkshire Council.
- 3.2 The Clerk has received notification from West Berkshire Council that, for the period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025, no Community Infrastructure Levy payments are due to the parish.

4.0 **Other matters**

- 4.1 The Berkshire Associated of Local Councils (BALC) is seeking feedback from all member town and parish councils on the training provision being offered. Any comments or suggested additional courses received from members will be fed back.
- 4.2 The annual RoSPA inspection of all the play areas and equipment has been carried out. The reports have been received and will form the basis of maintenance work to be carried out in the play areas over the coming months.
- 4.3 A group which has hired the halls at Calcot once a month for many years is having to consider moving to another venue because people who relied on the number 15 bus are unable to attend now the service no longer includes Royal Avenue.
- 4.4 The 1st Calcot Brownies recently advised that, due to a drop in attendance levels, it will no longer hold weekly sessions in the Calcot Main Hall on a Monday evening.
- 4.5 The Clerk has been advising and guiding a neighbouring parish about the correct process to follow when recruiting a new clerk.

- 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**

- Completing the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) ready for formal sign-off
- Preparing for the Final Internal Audit
- Drafting the Annual Report
- 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 has been used. Although Berkshire Youth is still very slow to provide any information and no updates have been received for a few months, 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) and Legionella testing 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.