

TILEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 14 April 2026 in the Main Hall, Calcot

Present

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

Mr Taylor opened the meeting by welcoming those present and explaining that the meeting would be recorded for minute-taking purposes. He then went on to say that a long-term local resident, Joan Lawrie, had recently passed away. She had formed and led the Save Pincents Hill group, and had been a very active member of the community. Mr Linden agreed, saying Mrs Lawrie had been a doughty campaigner and would be sadly missed. Mrs Furlong-King said she'd met Mrs Lawrie a few times and had found her inspirational.

26/037 Open Forum

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

26/038 Apologies for absence: Apologies had been received from Parish Councillors Mrs R Reynolds, Ms J Stewart, Mr M Powers, Mr R Loaring, Mrs R Braine, and District Councillor Janine Lewis

26/039 Declarations of interest:

Mr Taylor declared an interest in item 26/047-4 as he was a registered Berkshire Youth volunteer

26/040 Approval and adoption of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on

10 March 2026: The draft minutes had been circulated before the meeting and were taken as read and signed by the Chairman

26/041 Matters arising: There were no matters arising

26/042 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 6 May so that the parish could be represented.

Mr Taylor asked that the date of the next meeting be checked as he thought it would be the following week. He said that the Calcot Park Golf Club application might be on the agenda,

in which case a parish councillor would need to speak at the meeting. He suggested that, once the date was confirmed, he, Mrs Vickers and Ms Stewart should discuss the situation.

After the meeting, the date of the next Eastern Area Planning meeting was checked. According to West Berkshire's web site, it would be on Wednesday 6 May.

26/043 District Councillors' report: Ms Stewart and Mr Taylor had submitted reports before the meeting – see Appendices C and D.

Mr Linden sympathised with Mr Taylor about having no substitute for Eastern Area Planning meetings. Mr Taylor explained the issue was that the other members of the minority group were in the Western Area so had cover, but he was the only member in the Eastern Area and, so far, officers had not agreed to allow a substitute from another group/party.

26/044 Clerk's report: The report had been circulated before the meeting – see Appendix E.

The Clerk confirmed that £175,000.00 had been moved from the Lloyds bank account to CCLA.

She and Mrs Manghnani had attended an emergency planning session at Shaw House. Consideration was now being given to setting up a working group to draft and set up an emergency plan and anyone who would like to be included should let her know. Mr Linden said he was interested in joining the working group.

26/045 E-newsletter: The Spring issue of the e-newsletter had been circulated before the meeting and was noted.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the distribution was around 60 to 65 people. It was hoped this number would increase when the Facebook page was up and running.

A member of the public had circulated the latest issue of the newsletter with their Church bulletin, which was sent to about 110 people. When there was a page on the web site for newsletters, the link could be circulated. He was thanked for his help and support.

There was discussion about whether there should be future hard copies of the newsletter, and whether there were additional ways to advertise it.

26/046 Assertion 10 checklist: The updated checklist had been circulated before the meeting and was noted.

The Clerk explained that the majority of requirements had been completed but there were a couple of ongoing issues, including councillor training – so far only four had attended. Mr Taylor suggested a bespoke session could be arranged for the remaining nine councillors and the Clerk would look into this and other options and dates. She would discuss the other ongoing issues with the internal auditor when he visited on Friday 17 April.

26/047 Resolutions

26/047-1 Social media policy: The draft document had been circulated before the meeting, and it was unanimously agreed to adopt the social media policy.

Mr Royal agreed to help set up the Facebook page. In response to a question from Mr Taylor, the Clerk agreed this would be done within a month.

26/047-2 Biodiversity policy: The updated document had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that, having had some trees cut down in the Churchyard, there might be an opportunity to carry out some planting there. She also said the Church was interested in putting up some bat boxes. Mr Royal suggested there could be a more robust biodiversity plan including ongoing reporting of actions taken.

It was unanimously agreed that the Biodiversity policy should be re-adopted.

26/047-3 Working group terms of reference: The document had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that some of the requirements set out in the terms of reference were not being followed and, going forward, she would like to run working groups more in line with the policy.

After discussion, it was agreed (one abstention) to re-adopt the working group terms of reference.

26/047-4 Berkshire Youth partnership agreement for 2026-27: Berkshire Youth's proposal and costs for 2026-27 had been circulated before the meeting, together with a report. The Clerk summarised the situation and explained that she now needed to know what councillors wished to do.

There was discussion about the increase in Berkshire Youth's costs, which in some areas had risen by 100-150%, and the fact that no justification had been given. The average pay for a full-time youth worker was £32,000.00 per annum, so employing someone part-time would be more cost-effective. The Parish Council had experienced very poor admin and invoicing from Berkshire Youth and this had not improved recently.

It was felt that the proposal itself was very unclear and confusing, and the increased cost seemed disproportionate to the number of parishioners who benefitted. The Clerk pointed out that the proposal was for a significantly reduced service, and that Berkshire Youth intended charging the Parish Council £10.00 per session for activities while also retaining the entrance fees (which the Clerk currently used to fund activities).

Mr Taylor said, overall, very little was spent on youth services in the parish, it equated to about 5 pence per week per resident. He pointed out that the youth services budget for 2026-27 was £25,000.00, and a previous underspend of £17,000.00 was also available. He felt the contract should continue as suggested in the proposal, at a base cost of £21,273.88.

He said, if a new contract was signed, it could be terminated on a minimum of three months' notice.

Generally, councillors objected to such a large cost increase, particularly for a reduced service. The Clerk said that, in the 11 weeks from January to March 2026, there had been an average of seven youth club attendees on Tuesday, making an average cost of £23.79 per person. On Thursday, there had been an average of five young people, giving an average cost of £37.17 per attendee. It was felt that these costs were very high.

There was discussion about continuing to negotiate with Berkshire Youth and about contacting other organisations. It was suggested that a working group be set up to do this and to research what young people would like from a youth club.

After further discussion, it was agreed that talks and negotiation should continue with Berkshire Youth, and that other options should also be investigated.

26/048 Review of financial position and payments for March 2026: The information had been circulated before the meeting and was noted.

26/049 Chairman's remarks: Mr Taylor said a date had yet to be set for the councillors' social event. He, Mrs Manghnani and the Clerk would discuss and advise when a date had been agreed.

The meeting finished at 9.05pm

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 12 May 2026

Chairman

Appendix A – Planning decisions

25/02764/HOUSE	<u>Crevan, Beals Lane, Tilehurst</u> Retrospective application for air conditioning unit to south elevation	Granted retrospectively
25/02820/HOUSE	<u>68 Cotswold Way, Tilehurst</u> Roof extension	Granted
25/01984/HOUSE	<u>55 Warborough Avenue, Tilehurst</u> Two-storey side and single-storey rear extension with new front porch	Granted
26/00214/CERTP	<u>26 Oregon Avenue, Tilehurst</u> Installation of side door into existing garage plus change rear bay window into French doors	Lawful
25/02956/COND	<u>150 Long Lane, Tilehurst</u> Approval of details reserved by Condition (5) AMS of planning permission 25/01470/HOUSE: Proposed new detached garage to front of existing dwelling	Approved
26/00386/NONMAT	<u>4 Cranmer Close, Tilehurst</u> Application for a non-material amendment following a grant of planning permission 25/02165/HOUSE: Garage conversion and single storey side extension. Amendment: Only to complete kitchen extension at back of garage which will leave 75% of garage as is	Approved
24/01262/FUL	<u>36-38 Langley Hill, Calcot</u> Demolition of 36 Langley Hill to be replaced with an annexe to serve 38 Langley Hill, these will be attached by a two-storey link. Minor internal and external alterations are proposed to 38 Langley Hill	Granted

Appendix B – New Planning applications

26/00452/HOUSE

12 Longworth Avenue, Tilehurst

Adding a single storey above existing extension to create a two-storey side and rear extension

This Council has no objections to the proposal but supports the comments made by Highways

26/00544/HOUSE

94 Warborough Avenue, Tilehurst

Change existing canopy design from flat roof to a hipped canopy.
Extend existing drop kerb by 2.6m

This Council has no objections to the proposal

Appendix C – Ms J Stewart’s District Councillor’s report

Council – met on 26 March to discuss Swift Bricks and Statutory Pay Policy 2026/27. The next meeting will be the Annual Meeting on 14 May.

Executive – met on 19 March to discuss Motion to Council: decisions following public consultation, 2025/26 Performance Report Q3, Oral Health Needs Assessment Recommendation, Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing - Management Response to Task & Finish Group Recommendations, Proposed development of a Resource Base at Victoria Park Nursery School, Newbury. The next meeting will be on 21 May.

Culture

Pop up libraries – three new pop-up libraries are being launched in Aldworth, Shaw-cum-Donnington and Speen. The service is already offered in Basildon, Compton and Leckhampstead. Pop-up libraries are funded by local town/parish council or village hall committee.

Northcroft Lido – has reopened for the summer

New Shaw House Visitor Experience – as well as the permanent exhibition telling the story of the house and there are special exhibitions “Dressed for Battle” and “Dressed for Shaw”. Entry is £9 adults, £6 children and concessions, under 4s are free. There is a discounted rate for West Berkshire residents at £6. The House, exhibition and grounds will be open every day until 30 September. The gardens can be enjoyed free of charge, and the café and gift shop will be open to all visitors selling homemade treats and local products.

Environment

Plastic Tubes - plastic tubes are now included in kerbside recycling. This includes toothpaste tubes (hard and flexible), cosmetic tubes, and food tubes such as herb pastes, icing, hand creams and moisturisers. Caps must be left on and tubes should be left flat

New Cycle Pods – new “StreetPods” have been installed at Cotswold Sports Centre. They will be maintained by the centre’s operator, and will give people the option of cycling to the centre

Transport

Fare Changes - Connect tickets are valid on many local bus services. A range of options are available and, from 1 April, prices will change. Early Bird Urban Concessionary ticket will also change.

Education

Bikeability in May Half Term – there will be a course costing £25.00 for children aged ten and older at Cotswold Sports Centre on the morning of 27 May.

Current Consultations

[Planning Public Access Service feedback survey 2026](#) – 7 May

[Residents' Survey \(2026\)](#) – 10 May

Appendix D – Mr C Taylor’s District Councillor’s report

I attended the following West Berkshire Council meetings:

- Full Council: previous support for a proposal to insert a "swift brick" into all new houses was reversed due to cost. I voted against the reversal as the costs put forward were hard to believe.
- Corporate Parenting Panel: young people in care ran the first part of the meeting including quite thought provoking exercises to demonstrate how it feels for young people in care making the change to adulthood and finding their own homes and employment for the first time.
- Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education: - the new curriculum is in the process of being introduced
- Licensing Committee: a meeting to approve a consultation on the transfer of taxi licences within families, a practice going back many decades and which some view as unfair. The consultation was approved and will be conducted over the coming months
- Eastern Area Planning: site visit for the March meeting (I was the only councillor there other than the committee chairman). I was unable to attend the committee meeting due to a holiday. The site was not in Tilehurst. I am still unable to request a substitute to attend due to being the only minority group member in the Eastern wards. This has now been "under review" for around two years
- Children and Young Person's Scrutiny: I attended a pre-meeting yesterday (main meeting is later this week). Some quite disturbing reports have been issued covering student achievement levels and exclusion levels across WBC schools. A government Dept of Education representative will be attending the main meeting. Officers are working on improvement plans
- Licensing Sub-Committee Panel: a drinks and events application for Benham House west of Newbury. Many objectors and probably the longest panel meeting I have attended. The outcome has yet to be published

Local issues include:

- Evening public meeting with Garston Park residents. Over 30 attended but it was agreed to hold a further daytime meeting to attract higher attendance before formally creating the residents' association
- Street lights were fixed in a number of roads following chasing of contractors
- Two parking enforcement visits organised for City Road and roads off at school opening/closing times. I have also had agreement from Reading Borough Council's enforcement team to carry out joint sessions with WBC (part of City Road is in RBC). Many thanks to parish councillor Caroline Basden in facilitating this within about 24 hours!
- A licensing support question from a resident
- A new Sovereign Housing complaint I am pursuing with support from Citizens Advice in Newbury
- Continuing to advise Birch Copse residents concerned with the tree felling at Calcot Golf Course

And finally on a sad note, as some of you will know already, the leader and founder of the "Save Pincents Hill Group", Joan Lawrie, passed away last Sunday. I had known Joan for about 20 years. She was the driving force behind numerous campaigns to save Pincents Hill from development and through her lifetime succeeded in doing so. She was also a founder and for 10 years a member of the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Planning Group.

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 Queries raised on the Governance and Risk Management Scheme in the last Parish Council meeting had been checked and amendments had been made:

- Risk number 1.1 Precept not sufficient: the risk rating was 3, so the colour had been changed from green to orange
- Risk number 2.2 Conducting Council business: the wording “non-legal meetings, inaccurate meetings” had been changed to “non-legal meetings (eg no quorum), inaccurate recording of meetings”
- 2.4 Councillor propriety: the reference to “Standards Board and Committee” had been changed to “WBC’s Standards Board and Committee (Monitoring Officer)”
- 3.4 Loss of or damage to physical assets: in view of recent issues (damaged benches, graffiti, etc), risk level was increased from low to medium (likelihood and impact each to 2, giving a risk rating of 4)

2.2 Mrs Manghnani and the Clerk attended an update session on Emergency Planning. The interactive session explored the potential role of town and parish councils in the event of an emergency.

The Council’s Emergency Plan is out of date and will need to be rewritten. The Clerk will explore the possibility of establishing a working party to assist in drafting an updated plan.

2.3 The Clerk is still awaiting information from West Berkshire Council on the management of the Cotswold Sports Centre. Following discussion with the parish’s legal advisors and the Chairman, it was necessary to agree an extension of the Section 25 Notices for the Lease of the Cotswold Sports Centre to 30 September 2026.

3.0 Audit and finance

3.1 The Clerk and Derek Kemp, the Council’s accountant, had carried out the 2025-26 financial year-end closedown on Tuesday 7 April.

3.2 The Final Internal Audit for 2025/26, conducted by Auditing Solutions Limited, would be carried out on Friday 17 April 2026.

4.0 **Other matters**

4.1 On Tuesday 17 March, the Clerk attended a Clerk's Forum held at Holybrook Parish Council. There were eight attendees, and a wide range of topics were discussed.

4.2 The Romanian Orthodox Parish of St Stylianos and St Catherine asked to use the car park at Calcot from 9.30pm on Saturday 11 April to around 12.30am on Sunday 12 April for attendees of an Easter service at St Birinus. The request was considered by the Clerk, Chairman and Vice Chairman and, on Tuesday 7 April, the Clerk and Vice Chairman attended a Teams meeting to discuss the situation with Thames Valley Police, West Berkshire Council, and representatives of the church. Permission was given provided no cars were left overnight, there was sufficient supervision and stewarding, and consideration was shown to residents, particularly when arriving and leaving. This is an annual event and there were serious parking issues at Easter 2025.

5.0 **Priorities for April 2026** – this item gives information on priorities for the Clerk and officers over the coming month(s).

5.1 Cotswold Sports Centre

- Reviewing leases for the sports centre, overflow 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
- The Clerk and an Officer to meet with Everyone Active and West Berkshire Council to discuss how to improve the Energy Performance rating.

5.2 Calcot Centre repairs

- Progressing repairs to the Main Hall kitchen wall. Additional quotes have been received and submitted to the third party's insurance company
- Seeking quotes and progressing repairs to the changing room end of the building

5.3 Preparing for the Final Internal Audit inspection

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.