TILEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Serving the Communities of Birch Copse, Calcot, Denefield and Westwood

Tel: 0118 941 8833 E-mail: clerk@tilehurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.tilehurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2026, issue 5

Since the last newsletter, we have co-opted three new councillors, the first football matches have been held after a deferred start to the season, and the youth club has restarted in the Jubilee Annexe.

Autumn is when parish councils start looking at their budgets for the following financial year, so that is a key focus for us just now. Jacky, our Clerk, usually asks the Parish Council to decide where it wants to make any changes at the October meeting but, this year, the accountant and Jacky met to draft the 2027-28 budget before the October meeting, so councillors had to be consulted by e-mail.

We are also working on progressing projects part-funded by West Berkshire Council's Members' Bids at four recreation grounds as well as looking into the possibility of installing a new bus shelter in the parish, so things remain busy in the Parish Office.

Meanwhile, the two maintenance officers have marked out the football pitches and checked and topped up all the salt bins, in addition to carrying out all their usual duties.

Hildens Drive play area

The play area behind the parade of shops on Hildens Drive has two entrances on Foxcombe Drive, and both need to be locked overnight to prevent antisocial behaviour. We are looking for volunteers to help open and close the gates – as this is quite a commitment, ideally, the task would be shared between a group of local residents.



Unfortunately, the gates have had to be left open at night for the past couple of months, and this has led to a serious increase in antisocial behaviour in the area. As a result, arrangements have been made for Parish Council staff to open the gates after 9.00am and close them before 3.00pm on weekdays.

The gates will be kept locked at weekends until further notice.

Anyone able to help open/close the gates should please contact the Clerk (details above) – even one day regularly each week would be a great support, particularly at weekends.

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Parish Councillor vacancies

We are pleased to welcome three new councillors to Tilehurst Parish Council.

Ken Deeks (Tilehurst North Ward) and Penny Oderberg (Tilehurst Central Ward) were co-opted at the September meeting, and Christopher Pearce (Tilehurst North Ward) was co-opted at the October meeting. We look forward to working with them all.

This leaves us with three councillor vacancies which can be filled by co-option. If you're interested in representing the residents of Tilehurst Parish and having a say in how we spend the precept on their behalf, do consider becoming a parish councillor.

Anyone who'd like more information about the role should contact the Clerk by e-mailing clerk@tilehurstparishcouncil.gov.uk or calling 0118 941 8833.

Parish Council staff

A brief summary of who we are and what we do:

Jacky, the Clerk, is responsible for the whole council process, including compliance with legislation and control of financial aspects, and staff. She is very knowledgeable and experienced and has to be on top of everything. Cindy is probably the person you'll speak to about any hall-related enquiries, including availability, arranging viewings, and bookings invoicing. Sarah has a remit covering planning, finance support, writing documents (including this newsletter), web site and social media. Mark oversees the management and maintenance of the Parish Council's assets, such as the halls and play areas, and works closely with the maintenance team, covering when anyone's off. Actually, all office staff have to be flexible about covering for leave, so the roles are pretty varied.

Then there's Ian and Paul, our two maintenance officers, they're responsible for day-to-day cleaning and maintenance of all the halls, recreation grounds, play areas, bus shelters – parish assets generally. They are the ones you'll see out and about most often.

Halls

Tilehurst Parish Council owns and maintains four halls, two in Calcot – Main Hall and Jubilee Annexe on Highview – and two in Tilehurst – Cornwell Centre at Clements Mead, and Turnhams Farm Hall on Little Heath Road.

All four halls are available to regular hirers who have weekly or monthly bookings, as well as to one-off hirers holding meetings, parties, or other events.

Some information about each hall, the hourly charges and the Terms and Conditions of hire may be found on our web site. Anyone wishing to make an enquiry should contact bookings@tilehurstparishcouncil.gov.uk.

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Recreation grounds

Entrance gate, Calcot



In early September, a car was driven into the open gates at the car park entrance at Calcot, causing serious damage. The gates were left in a dangerous state so were removed for safety reasons. The incident was reported to the police and the Parish Council's insurance company, and installation of replacement gates is being arranged by the Clerk.

Football matches

The long hot and very dry summer meant the football pitches on our recreation grounds were not ready for matches to be played on them in early September, so the playing season was deferred. Although the pitches are still very dry, the first matches were held on Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 October.

Members' Bids

In May, two Members' Bids were submitted to West Berkshire Council. The maximum available was £4,000.00 per district councillor, to be match-funded by Tilehurst Parish Council.

Cllrs Jo Stewart and Clive Taylor put in their whole allowance for Tilehurst Birch Copse ward, and the application was successful, so £8,000.00 Members' Bid funding is available for:

Calcot recreation ground – replace the wooden train with a multiplay unit for toddlers
Turnhams Farm recreation ground – replace two springers

As there was no quorum at the August Full Council meeting, a contractor could not be appointed until September, when the work was awarded to Koolplay Ltd. Since then, there have been site visits, meetings and discussions about the work, so progress is being made.

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The second Members' Bid submitted in May was for projects in Tilehurst and Purley ward. The three district councillors each committed all or part of their allocation - £4,000.00 from Cllr Janine Lewis and £3,000.00 each from Cllrs Paul Kandor and Jane Langford. However, there was a glitch, and the application was not included for review at West Berkshire Council's panel meeting. A special meeting had to be arranged, and the Clerk confirmed at the September Parish Council meeting that the application had been successful, so £10,000.00 was available for:

Cornwell recreation ground – replace the stile with a new disabled access gate
Cotswold recreation ground – resurface footpath between Warbreck Drive and Downs Way

Further quotes for the work are being sought and will be presented to a future Parish Council meeting, when a contractor will be selected.

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Possible new bus shelter on City Road

The Parish Council is currently looking into the possibility of installing a new bus shelter on City Road, Tilehurst. The Clerk has met with three contractors to discuss the work. She and officers from West Berkshire Council also carried out a site visit and discussed licences, land ownership, road closure during installation, and shelter design and specifications. Funding for this project is from West Berkshire Council's Local Authority Bus Grant from the Department for Transport.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

On 16 July, the government confirmed that three new unitary councils would be created for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire, with effect from 1 April 2028:

- Ridgeway Council – West Berkshire Council and most of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts
- North Oxfordshire Council – covering most of the Cherwell and West Oxfordshire districts
- Greater Oxford Council – covering Oxford and its immediate surroundings

No changes to the border with Reading were proposed as part of the reorganisation.

However, on 7 September, the government announced that, following updated legal advice, national Local Government Reorganisation plans would be paused while a full review (including the three councils model affecting West Berkshire) was carried out. Local elections scheduled for May 2027 will go ahead under existing council boundaries.

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In mid-September, the Clerk met with the Clerks of other Councils due to form the new Ridgeway Council. Although the announcement to pause the Local Government Reorganisation had been made only shortly before the meeting date, the Clerks decided to meet as planned.

The meeting gave the opportunity to discuss individual parishes, any devolution which had already taken place or was being considered, and how the different District and County Councils operated.

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

When the government's LGR plans were announced, the Parish Council decided no further work on the NDP should be carried out until the outcome was known. The situation was reviewed at the October meeting and, as LGR has been paused, it was agreed to continue to suspend work on the NDP until the future of the parish and district councils was known.

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Youth services

Youth club, Calcot

The youth club on Thursday evenings in the Jubilee Annexe at Calcot started again in September, following the school summer holidays.



Activities are paid for out of entrance fees. So far, the young people have enjoyed team building games, brownie making, arts and crafts, slime making, board games, memory game, as well as a pizza night, bingo, air hockey, toastie making, karaoke, and games on the recreation ground. There is also a tuck shop at every session.

Anyone aged 11 to 17 years is welcome to attend the youth club, and there is no charge for the first session, it is free.

Volunteers are also welcome, and all the necessary checks and training will be provided. Anyone interested in helping run the youth club should contact Berkshire Youth – admin@berkshireyouth.co.uk

Kicks sessions, Cotswold

It is hoped that weekly Kicks sessions will restart at the Cotswold Sports Centre in the next few months, and the Clerk has been negotiating with Reading Football Club who will run them.

In late September, an application was made to the Community Fund to help with the costs. The fund, which is jointly managed by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable, is created from the sale of items seized from criminals and which it is not possible to return to their rightful owners.

Clocks change



Don't forget, clocks go back one hour at 2.00am on Sunday 25 October as we move to Greenwich Mean Time.

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Parish Council Meetings

Tilehurst Parish Council meets on the second Tuesday of each month in the Main Hall at Calcot. The schedule for the next six months is below.

Schedule of Parish Council meetings

10 November
8 December
12 January 2027
9 February
9 March
13 April

Meetings start at 7.30pm and generally last for about two hours. These are public meetings and parishioners are welcome to attend; there is a public open forum at the start when residents can ask questions or raise topics of concern. For the rest of the meeting, members of the public may observe but not take part in discussions. It is recommended that anyone wishing to attend a meeting contacts the Clerk in advance by e-mailing clerk@tilehurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

Agendas and minutes of meetings may be found on the Parish Council's web site – www.tilehurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

Contact

The Parish Office is open to the public during from 9.00am to 3.00pm on weekdays (except Bank Holidays), and residents are very welcome to come in to discuss any questions or issues they might have.

The office address is:	Highview, Calcot, Reading RG31 4XD
Telephone number:	0118 941 8833
Web site:	www.tilehurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

Hall and football pitch enquiries should be sent to bookings@tilehurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

If you know anyone who would like to sign up to our newsletter, please ask them to contact sarah@tilehurstparishcouncil.gov.uk giving the e-mail address they'd like us to use.

Christmas opening hours

The Parish Office will close for Christmas at 3.00pm on Wednesday 23 December 2026. It will reopen at 9.00am on Monday 4 January 2027.

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Community information

Greenfield House

In early October, staff and visitors at Greenfield House, Calcot, collected donations of food as part of their Harvest Festival celebrations. Everything they collected was very kindly donated to the Foodbank which is held on Mondays (excluding bank holidays) in the Jubilee Annexe at Calcot.

A big "thank you" to Greenfield House!

Volunteering

Carebus Community Transport is looking for volunteer drivers to join the team in helping elderly, disabled and isolated residents by taking them to medical and social appointments, as well as on trips out as a group. Volunteers can use their own cars or one of the Carebus accessible cars or minibuses. Training is provided and expenses will be paid.

Anyone who can spare a few hours a month (there is no need to commit to a regular time) can find more information on the charity's web site. Alternatively, please call 0118 930 4837 or e-mail info@carebus.org to request a free introductory leaflet for volunteer drivers.

Seasonal activities

All Hallows' Eve, or Halloween, falls on Saturday 31 October and, as well as pumpkin carving, dressing up and trick or treating, there's a range of other activities available in the area (most do charge so costs need to be checked).

- From 24 to 31 October, 10.00am to 3.00pm – Beale Park Pumpkin Patch, Lower Basildon
- 23 to 31 October, 9.30am to 4.00pm – Poisons and Potions trail, The Living Rainforest, Hampstead Norreys
- Saturday 31 October, 10.30am to 4.30pm – Alternative Halloween Market, Reading Biscuit Factory

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Thursday 5 November is Guy Fawkes (or Bonfire) Night and on Sunday 1 November, there will be a firework display at Mapledurham Lock in Purley on Thames. Details and ticket prices can be found on the Thameside Fireworks web site.

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Barton Rovers Football Club



Barton Rovers FC was founded in 1982 by three Tilehurst parents whose sons had nowhere local to play – it took its name from Barton Road where two of the founders lived. More than four decades on, it is one of Reading's largest youth football clubs, with over 400 registered players and teams from mini-soccer through to adults. It is based at Turnham's Farm, Little Heath Road.

This season, Reading-based Berkshire Accountants Limited is sponsoring the club, and the under-15s squad will wear the firm's name on their sky-blue shirts for another year.

School updates

There are nine schools in the parish of Tilehurst, and we have invited each to submit regular items to the Parish Council Newsletter to help keep residents informed and updated.

Downsway Primary School, Tilehurst

It has been a real joy to welcome our new Foundation Stage children and their families to Downsway Primary School at the start of the new academic year.

Starting school is such a special milestone in a child's life, and we have been delighted to see our newest pupils arrive each morning with growing confidence, excitement and enthusiasm. From their very first days, they have been busy exploring their new surroundings, making friends, getting to know the staff and discovering all that life at Downsway has to offer.

We are incredibly proud of how brilliantly they have settled into school life. They have already shown such wonderful curiosity, kindness and resilience, and it has been lovely to see their personalities beginning to shine through. Our classrooms have been filled with laughter, conversation, creativity and, of course, plenty of learning through play.

These first few weeks are just the beginning of what will be a happy, exciting and memorable primary school journey. We cannot wait to watch our Foundation Stage children grow in confidence, develop their talents, make lifelong friendships and become the wonderful young people we know they can be.

If you have a child due to start school in Foundation Stage in September 2027, you are welcome to visit us. Tours are booked through our school office.



Calcot Infant and Junior Schools

Our children have returned to school excited to learn and ready for a new term. We have plenty to look forward to, including trips to Rushall Farm, Stonehenge, Houses of Parliament, Imperial War Museum and Winchester Science Museum, as well as winter productions, school discos and community events. Our choir will also be singing at a concert at Loddon Hall, and at Arlington Arts and the Turn Tilehurst Red event.

Give your textiles a new home – we have a textile bank for donations of good-quality clothing and textiles that still have plenty of life in them. Donated items are distributed across Eastern Europe, where they can be used and loved again.

The Calcot Schools PTFA receives a small income from these donations, which helps to enrich the curriculum for all pupils. The textile bank is located outside the Junior School office and is easily accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Could You Volunteer With Us? – we are always grateful for support from members of our local community. There are many ways to get involved, including listening to our children read, helping with Forest School sessions at the Infant School and sharing your knowledge and experiences, including memories of historical events.

To volunteer or find out more, please contact one of our school offices:

Calcot Infant School	0118 941 8189	office@c-inf.w-berks.sch.uk
Calcot Junior School	0118 942 8727	office@c-jun.w-berks.sch.uk

St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School, Tilehurst

It has been a busy and exciting start to the new school year at St Paul's Catholic Primary School in Tilehurst. We have been delighted to welcome all of our children back after the summer break, including 40 new children who have joined our Early Years. They have settled in brilliantly and it has been wonderful to see our newest pupils beginning their journey at St Paul's.

We are already looking ahead to September 2027 and will be holding a series of Open Days for families considering St Paul's for their child's Reception place. Visitors will have the opportunity to look around the school, meet members of our team and get a feel for everyday life at St Paul's. Our next Open Days are: Thursday 5 November at 11.00am; Monday 9 November at 1.30pm; Wednesday 25 November at 11.00am; Tuesday 8 December at 9.30am; and Thursday 7 January at 1.30pm

We are very proud to be part of the Tilehurst community and always enjoy welcoming new families through our doors. If you have a child due to start school in September 2027, or know somebody who does, we would love you to come along to one of our Open Days and discover more about St Paul's.