MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN THE JUBILEE HALL ON MONDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2026 AT 7.30PM

Present: Mrs Caroline Hjorth (Chair)
Mr Duncan Boulton
Mrs Andrea Fawell
Mr Henry Evans
Mr John Poole
Mr Andrew White (Clerk)
Cllr Georgina Heritage (District and County Council) (left during Item 9)

No members of the public

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Margaret Poole sent her apologies.

Item 1: MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST (FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA)

No declarations of interest were made.

Item 2: TO APPROVE & SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14TH SEPTEMBER 2026

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th September 2026 were accepted as a true record of proceedings and signed by the Chair.

Item 3: MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES (INFORMATION ONLY)

The Neighbourhood Plan team had been due to give the Council a briefing. As there was little to report, the briefing had been deferred and the team would attend the November meeting.

The Chair reported that edible dormice (glis glis) had again been caught in the village and Members were asked to be aware.

Item 4: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No members of the public were present.

Item 5: THAMES VALLEY POLICE REPORT

There was no police report.

The Chair had written, on behalf of the Parish Council and as a resident, to the Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Barber, setting out the series of burglaries in the village and asking that rural crime be given greater priority. The letter noted that the glove recovered locally had still not been collected by the investigating officer. It also raised the increasing noise from motorcycles and cars, including on the M40 at night, and asked whether the motorway traffic officers had any policing role. A Detective Constable had acknowledged the letter and was due to respond by email.

Cllr Heritage welcomed the letter. She had recently joined a group with the Police and Crime Commissioner on serious crime and noted that, while hare coursing had reduced significantly, burglaries had not.

The Lewknor Parish Recreation Ground and Hall trustees had applied to the proceeds of crime community fund for new security lighting around the Jubilee Hall, at a cost of just under £1,000. The outcome was awaited.

ACTION:
Chair to report any response from Thames Valley Police.

Item 6: DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

The written District and County Councillor reports had been circulated and Members had read them. Cllr Heritage did not go through the reports in detail as she needed to leave for another parish meeting.

Much of the District report covered the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). News on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) was expected towards the end of the week; OCC was also looking into the judicial review position. Cllr Heritage would update the Council if anything was announced.

Bus services questionnaire

The Chair was completing the questionnaire for Oxfordshire parishes on bus services. The parish had been classed as having an hourly or better bus service. OCC had replied that diverting the 40 service into the village was a matter for the operator, citing layover time and the safety of a three-point turn, and that the parish was well served by the 40 and the Oxford Tube.

Members disagreed with this assessment. Lewknor village is served into the village twice a week; the 40 runs on the B4009, a walk of about a mile from parts of the village; and Postcombe has the 275 four times a day on weekdays only. The two settlements have different needs, and the lack of a usable service affects residents who are less mobile.

ACTION:
Chair to forward the correspondence and her notes to Cllr Heritage. Cllr Heritage to send a fuller response to OCC in support.

Grants

Cllr Heritage advised that the SODC Councillor Community Grant was open until 4th December 2026 and the OCC Priority Fund was in its final month. She would set aside about £1,200 from the Priority Fund for the Council's play park bark (see Item 11a) and expected an application.

Meeting with SODC Planning

The Chair and Cllr Fawell were to attend a Teams meeting with Emily Hamilton on Thursday afternoon about the Council's complaint on the P25/S1430/O appeal. The aim was to make clear that the complaint concerned the process and was not personal to any officer. It was agreed that Cllr Heritage would listen in.

Item 7: REVIEW OF COUNCIL PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTATION

a) Dignity at Work Policy (DRAFT)

b) Disciplinary Policy (DRAFT)

c) Emergency Mandate (DRAFT)

d) Equality and Diversity Policy (DRAFT)

e) Grievance Policy (DRAFT)

The draft policies had been prepared by Cllr Fawell from NALC model documents and standardised, and the Clerk had added the Council's header and footer. The Emergency Mandate had been retained in its existing form; it covers circumstances such as a pandemic or severe weather preventing meetings.

RESOLVED:
To adopt the Dignity at Work Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Emergency Mandate, Equality and Diversity Policy and Grievance Policy, remove the DRAFT status and publish them on the website.

f) Spreadsheet schedule for monitoring and updating policies and procedures

The Clerk confirmed that all mandatory policies had now been adopted. The remaining items on the schedule were optional. NALC does not provide templates for social media guidelines or a data breach policy. Members agreed not to pursue these at present: the Council does not use social media to discuss business with parishioners, and data breaches are covered by the Data Protection Policy and the Council's ICO registration.

Policies would be reviewed every two years, other than those reviewed annually, or sooner if required. A review does not necessarily mean a revision.

The Councillors' Handbook is an OALC document rather than a Council policy and would be removed from the schedule.

The Chair queried the Council's postal address. The website gives the Jubilee Hall rather than the Clerk's address, for privacy reasons, and most suppliers now invoice by email. It was suggested that the Hall trustees consider a locked post box at the Hall.

ACTION:
Clerk to publish the adopted policies on the website, update the schedule, and add a link to the Neighbourhood Plan.

ACTION:
Chair to raise a locked post box with the Hall trustees.

Item 8: FINANCE

a) Month end bank reconciliation

The month end bank reconciliation as at 30 September 2026 was received and noted and signed by Cllr Boulton

Treasurers Account: £2611.50

Business Savings Account: £24085.19

Hall Account: £4178.45

b) Payment schedule for review and authorisation

Payment schedule as at October 12th 2026

OUTGOING

Supplier	Detail	Amnt £	Inv Date	Inv No	Type	Cllr1	Cllr2
Andy White	Sept Payment	502.75	01/10/26		BACS		
HMRC	Sept Payment	124.20	01/10/26		BACS		
BGG	Grass cutting (HELD, see below)	691.20	30/09/26	27173	BACS		
Pet Waste Solutions	Dog Bins	102.25	01/10/26	68022	BACS		
Scribe	Accounting Software	37.20	01/10/26	22623	DD		
Tesco Mobile	Clerk's phone	8.42	13/09/26	134315686424	DD		

INCOMING

Second Bus Shelter invoice for £350 paid on 18/09/26.

The BGG grass cutting invoice (£691.20) described cutting of rural and urban areas. Members noted that the Council pays only for urban cuts within the 30mph limits, for which it receives a grant from OCC of about £1,100 and does not pay for rural cutting. Members wished to confirm the dates and number of cuts and to obtain an invoice that accurately describes the work.

RESOLVED:

That the payments listed on the schedule be approved, with the exception of the BGG invoice, which is held pending clarification.

ACTION:

Payments to be authorised by Cllr Hjorth and Cllr Fawell

ACTION:

Clerk to query the BGG invoice wording and the dates of the cuts; payment to be authorised once a corrected invoice is received.

No invoice had yet been received from Heat Industrial for minor repair work; this would be paid in November if received.

c) Council payroll

The Council payroll payments to the Clerk and HMRC for September were noted as approved and paid.

d) Bus Shelter Grant

The second invoice of £350 for the Bus Shelter Grant from OCC for 2026/27 was noted as paid.

e) Initial budget spreadsheet

The Clerk had circulated the initial budget spreadsheet, with a 3% inflation uplift applied. The budget should be agreed by the December meeting so that the precept can be submitted in January. The Clerk would check expected annual costs with regular suppliers. Members were asked to suggest any additional items, such as work to the play park; the budget could also be discussed by email.

Provision of about £1,000 to £1,200 would be included for the costs of a contested election in May 2027. If not spent, this would go to reserves. The Clerk advised that the Council should hold between 50% and 100% of annual expenditure in reserve and currently holds less, and Members agreed that reserves should be increased.

ACTION:
Members to send any budget items to the Clerk ahead of the November meeting.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Clerk reported that CIL of about £7,000 was due to the Council. Members agreed not to decline the draw-down, so the funds would be received at the end of October. CIL is held separately from the budget and reserves and must be spent within five years of receipt.

Jubilee Hall tree and hedge works

The Hall trustees had received a quote to cut back the trees along the driveway and the hedge on the High Street, and the growth that gives edible dormice access to the Hall roof. The work is unlikely to be carried out within the next month. Because heating oil costs are pressing on the trustees' funds, the Chair asked that the work be paid from the Lewknor Parish Recreation Ground and Hall account held by the Council. The invoice must be addressed to the Parish Council so that VAT can be reclaimed.

RESOLVED:
That the invoice for the tree and hedge works at the Jubilee Hall be paid from the Hall Account.

Item 9: PLANNING

a) New planning applications

P26/S4254/PIP: Erection of up to 9 dwellings (Permission in Principle), Land South of High Street, Lewknor

The consultation expiry date had been extended to 21st October 2026. Cllr J Poole had drafted the Council's response. A Permission in Principle application can only be assessed on location, land use and the amount of development, so the response cited the relevant policies on each:

- the site abuts the designated Local Green Space at the recreation ground and would harm its open character;
- the site is at the edge of the High Street, outside the settlement boundary, and would set a precedent for uncontrolled expansion;
- parking pressure, layout constraints and highway safety near the Jubilee Hall and Red Kite Park, with the High Street ending in a cul-de-sac;
- conflict with the made Neighbourhood Plan.

The response recommends refusal. Members also wished to add that the proposal would leave the remaining land without access, creating backland development, and to raise noise from the M40, noting that SODC's environmental team had raised noise concerns on P25/S1430/O.

Members noted the scale of recent growth. About 22 dwellings had been built in Lewknor village since 2011, or 47 including the 25 allowed at Watlington Road, an increase of about 27% on the village. Across the parish, including 8 at Salt Lane, the increase was about 18%.

Residents may comment individually. The application documents and consultee comments are on the SODC planning portal, and Cllr Heritage would post a reminder of the extended deadline on Lewknor Life. Members of the Neighbourhood Plan team would respond as residents.

RESOLVED:
That the draft response be circulated to Members for any additions and submitted by the Clerk before the consultation deadline.

ACTION:
Chair to circulate Cllr J Poole's draft; Members to send any additions within a few days; Clerk to submit the response by 21st October 2026.

Appeal 6010671 (P24/S3485/FUL): Field near London bound M40 slip road, Junction 6

The building remains in place. Cllr J Poole confirmed that the appeal is shown on the Planning Inspectorate's appeals portal under its own reference, with a start date of 23rd June 2026. Awaiting decision.

b) Status of applications

The status of P26/S0550/N4C & P26/S0551/N4C, P25/S1430/O and P25/S1987/FUL was noted as set out on the agenda. No update had been received from SODC Enforcement.

c) Request for information relating to P26/S0550/N4C & P26/S0551/N4C and the Council's enforcement request

Members considered an enquiry about the site. The Council's enforcement request remains with SODC, and the Council cannot share the details of its submission.

RESOLVED:
That the Clerk reply to the enquiry, confirming that the matter had been discussed and that the Council cannot share the details of its enforcement submission.

ACTION:
Cllr Heritage to follow up the enforcement case with SODC.

Item 10: HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

a) Traffic Advisory Committee

The next meeting is on the morning of 9th November 2026. Discussion continues to be dominated by Chinnor; the Chair would make sure Lewknor's issues are raised.

b) Other issues

- Diversions from road closures in Chinnor, and from Thames Water works, were sending traffic along the A40 through Postcombe. Members felt that diversion planning and communication between utilities and the highway authority needed to improve, as closures often did not run to the dates notified.
- A temporary traffic regulation order had been notified for Western Road, Lewknor, from 15th to 19th December Notices could be shared on Lewknor Life.
- A Postcombe resident had asked about a pedestrian crossing on the A40. Members noted that this had been considered with OCC previously. A crossing would need street lighting and signal control, at a cost estimated then at about £100,000, and there are few suitable locations.

ITEM 11: PLAY PARK AND ENVIRONMENT

a) Annual Play Park inspection (deferred from previous meeting)

Members reviewed the annual inspection report (inspection July 2026). No high-risk (red) items were identified, and the depth of the bark surfacing was marked as low risk.

The Clerk had obtained pricing for play bark of about 8 to 9 cubic metres. Supplier guidance gave different depths (50mm for general use and 300mm for play areas), and the British Standard depth depends on the critical fall height of the equipment. Cllr J Poole would ask the play inspection company for the depth required.

Funding would be sought from Cllr Heritage's OCC Priority Fund (about £1,200, or more if labour is included). The bark should be ordered and laid before the weather turns. Members suggested asking the Community Payback team, who had recently cleared the churchyard, to spread it, as an alternative to a working party or paid labour.

The latest report also needs to be compared with the previous one to list the remaining minor works, such as bolt cap covers, which can be ordered from the equipment manufacturers. Cllr J Poole would look for the costed parts list he had prepared previously.

ACTION:
Cllr J Poole to confirm the required bark depth with the play inspection company and locate the previous costed parts list.

ACTION:
Clerk to finalise the bark quantity and cost, apply to Cllr Heritage for the grant, and enquire about the Community Payback team.

ACTION:
Chair to provide the Community Payback contact details to the Clerk.

b) Maintenance and repair of the bus shelter on the A40

Cllr Hjorth had obtained two quotes. A like-for-like repair was quoted at about £230 to £250. A second contractor quoted £365 to replace the damaged elm boards in oak and had confirmed that the shelter is structurally sound. Given the small sums, further quotes were not required, and the work is within the budget.

RESOLVED:
To accept the quote of £365 for repairs to the A40 bus shelter in oak.

ACTION:

Chair to instruct the contractor.

c) Postcombe play area

Following last month's action, the Chair had visited the padel court operator about a resident's suggestion of a children's play area in Postcombe. The Chair explained that the Council cannot buy land or fund such a facility. Residents could set up a charitable group to access grants, and the Council could help identify grant funding. No commitment was made on behalf of the Council.

ACTION:
Chair to update the resident and offer to sit in on any meeting with the operator, without commitment.

Item 12: MEETING DATES

The proposed meeting dates for 2027 were reviewed. The May meeting will also be the Annual Meeting, and the August date is held in reserve if needed.

RESOLVED:
To approve the meeting dates for 2027 as circulated.

ACTION:
Clerk to publish the 2027 meeting dates on the website.

Item 13: CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Nothing of note

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 9th November 2026 – Monthly Parish Council Meeting.

The meeting closed at 21:43.

Chair: ..... **Date:.....**