



Benson Parish Council

Benson Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford. OX10 6LZ

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

Recreation & Lands Committee

Membership:

Councillor Patricia Baylis (Chair), Councillor Robert Castelow-Sturges, Councillor Gavin McLauchlan, Councillor Roger Moore, Councillor Phil Murray and Councillor Tom Stevenson.

MINUTES OF THE BENSON PARISH COUNCIL RECREATION AND LANDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE PARISH HALL ON MONDAY 9th JUNE 2025 AT 7.00PM.

Present- Cllr Patricia Baylis (Chair), Cllr Bill Pattison, Cllr Robert Castelow-Sturges, Cllr Gavin McLauchlan and Cllr Tom Stevenson.

Members of the Public- One

Clerk – Nicola Copland

L Johnston
12 June 2025

1. Election of Chair.

BPC Chair Bill Pattison asked for nominations. Cllr Mc Lauchlan nominated Cllr Baylis, and this was seconded by Cllr Pattison.

2. Apologies and absences.

Cllr R Moore sent his apologies. Cllr P Murray was absent.

3. Review Terms of Reference.

These were reviewed and adopted.

4. Declarations of interest

Members must ensure that they complete the Declaration of Interest sheet prior to the start of the meeting in respect of items other than Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and must indicate the action to be taken.

No declarations.

5. Public session

A member of Benson Youth Football Club addressed the Committee to express their concerns regarding the upcoming Thames Water sewage works on Sunnyside. This will involve placing a 50x50m storage compound on Sunnyside which will hugely impact the club. Effectively the compound will wipe out the 11- a- side pitch and a 7-a -side pitch. They already use the new school field and can't fit any other pitches there. Finding replacement pitches also require new goalposts, and line painting access to defib etc. Fearful of the time over running as well. Councillors thanked the member for coming to the meeting to put forward their views.

6. Minutes of the last meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and Lands Committee held on Thursday 13th March 2025 and sign as a true record of the meeting.

7. Actions from the last meeting.

Paving around millstream – ongoing difficulty finding contractor

Oxfordshire Together – ongoing check with OCC

Fencing to dog proof skatepark – Simple round topped fencing. One company has quoted (difficulty finding other companies as not interested due to previous quoting and not winning the work). **Action** –Cllr Pattison suggested another company.



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Rivermead – Planning Application (PA) in progress. Cllr Pattison awaiting response to his suggestions. Cllrs should respond to proposals by the end of the week. Note has been received from a parishioner re including disabled access and gate.

Benson history leaflet – In progress

Cuckoo Pen – in progress – next step meeting with RFO

The Cedars – Arborist visited 3 sites. He inspected some of the trees and will be sending in a report next week. He inspected the tree at Millbrook Mead (query is this on private land?) and awaiting report.

Warwick Spinney crossing – Landowner has agreed permission for a bridge and Committee are keen to push ahead.

Allotments – Water meter -on agenda. Chicken Coops – c/f. Boreholes – wip.

Fencing around play area – in process of obtaining quotes along with skate park fencing.

Basketball hoop – query whether hoop needs to be moved. Suggest rotate the hoop. Action - Bill and Darren to discuss.

Tree canopy lift – pending end of bird nesting season.

Stones on Edge of Aldridge triangle – Pending public art

Planting at Faye Elizabeth Park – b/f Patricia

Paving at war memorial/drop kerb – have PP from SODC. Action – Follow up with Geoff France (Bewley Homes). Cllr McLauchlan to find out name of person to speak to at OCC Highways. Urgency to complete by Remembrance Parade.

Bins – BPC bins should be on BPC land or as close to our border as possible. Bin will be on Warborough side near to bridge location.

Dog waste dispensers now removed.

Dog Fouling – on agenda.

College Farm waste – on agenda.

Notice boards at Bob's Corner – In progress.

Map of Benson – needs completely re-doing. Any ideas bring to next meeting.

Litter picking group – in process of setting it up. McDonalds have agreed to sponsor by providing litter picking equipment and high vis jackets.

Church Road junction planters-In progress-grounds team to do.

6. Green Spaces

a. Aldridge Triangle-discuss Management Plan. In principle the plan works but could be tweaked to allow for local resident's concerns. Suggest having a mid-season "Chelsea Cut". Discuss with the residents around the Aldridge Triangle. Action Cllr Pattison to speak to them with the Clerk.

b. Discuss the DWH green spaces document – Action – Cllrs to look at the document (specifically area 1 and area 3) and respond to the Clerk with comments. Discuss when Cllr Murray is at the meeting. Concern that there will be a lot of long grass but insufficient amenity spaces for children to play in/kick a ball around on. There are cricket stumps on one of the areas but there are sharp flints there. Lots of sharp metal found on these areas during the litter pick. Area 3 is where the DWH sundial will go.

Cala/Remus – Concern that the area is not being looked after by the management company. The wildflowers are not thriving, and the attenuation ponds may need attention. Action-Ask for the management plans for these areas,

7. Skate Park

a. To discuss fencing the area – already discussed.

b. Any issues – none.



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8. Rivermead.

a. Update on the refurbishment project –We have received a response from EA with schematic. Cllr Baylis has responded to EA with comments. Next stage to appoint a project manager, Cllr Pattison suggested contacting Blueprint and to ask LCC for advice on appointing a PM. Cllr McLauchlan offered to help with recruitment/interview of PM. Cllr Pattison will be submitting a planning application, and a primary roost assessment (PRA) bat survey has been booked for the 2 buildings on 25th June.

b. **Bat survey**- Quotes were considered for a comprehensive bat survey to be carried out on the 2 buildings. Initial basic survey found evidence of bat droppings. After the initial PRA (25th June) there is a requirement for up to 3 bat emergence surveys. The deadline to complete this process is September.

Bat Emergence -Clerk has contacted 3 suppliers, one was £6419+VAT, one was for £4,340+VAT and the other didn't have any availability.

Action - Recommendation to Full Council that BPC spends no more than £4400+ VAT on the required bat surveys at the 2 buildings at Rivermead. and appoints Nature Bureau to carry these out.

c. Any issues – Cllr Pattison confirmed there is a live electricity supply down at Rivermead.

9. Allotments

a. Report from Allotments Manager. Query whether there were more plots unattended. **Action** Facilities Manager to review 30A and other plots near the brook which appear overgrown. Clerk to send maps for Cllrs to pinpoint plots. Query progress re numbering plots.

b i. Discuss the installation of a water meter at St Helen's allotments. Water bill is £2500 a year for both sites and the paddock and income received from the allotments is £1900. The Paddock tenants should be charged for water, but this is not metered so cannot ascertain use. Lee Brooks had quoted £884 to install a water meter. Water Meter will be underground and lagged for protection against weather. **Action** – **Recommendation to Full Council** to employ Lee Brooks to install a water meter at the Paddock at a cost of no more than £900+VAT for the purposes of charging the tenants correctly for water.

ii. Discuss the Paddock rent rates £28.75 per month **Action** Check with RFO whether rent has been increased and if so how frequently.

c. Update on possible bore holes – ongoing.

d. Discuss the cost of water provision and troughs and look at possible solutions. Maintenance of troughs is £400 per year. A staff member suggested a push button tap. A tap would enable people to put a hose on. Committee decided to continue to pay maintenance costs and replace as appropriate.

e. Any other issues – **Action** – put the noticeboards up.

10. Sunnyside

a. Update on dog fouling. – still an issue. It's a nationwide problem. **Action** - Put out a comms – If you don't pick up you may be caught on CCTV and will be reported to the SODC dog fouling team. Put a sign up to say there is CCTV and a warden.

b. Any other issues. The meeting returned to the issue of the Thames Water compound on Sunnyside. If we refused permission what would be the other options? A previous licence agreement was looked at with the hire charges but for a smaller container. The football club will be out of pocket and will need compensation. Consider penalties for overrun and re-instatement details (possibility of tarmacking so we get a pathway) **Action** – Clerk to send copy of the previous licence agreement and ask why compound is increasing in size and whether it has to be square – if it was elongated then it would encroach less on the pitches.



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11. Play Areas

- a. Update on possible refurbishment of Green Close Action – on hold until it is clear how much money is available for the project.
- b. Any other issues - none

12. Waste and bins.

- a. Update
- b. Update on dumped waste at College Farm – Quote received from Biffa. Awaiting Grundon quote. **Action** – Clerk to go ahead with best quote.

13. Storage container in the parish hall grounds.

To consider purchasing a temporary storage container to hold R&L grounds equipment. 3 quotes were considered and Flinthams were the cheapest. Will be used to store a chipper and a trailer. No planning permission needed as the container is temporary and can also be moved.

Action - Recommendation to Full Council that BPC purchase a high-top container from Flintham for no more than £3,000.

14. General items.

- a. Update on the War Memorial – already discussed
- b. Discuss Interpretation Boards – **Action** – ask Edel for an update. Bring ideas to next meeting.
- c. Note the request to remove advertising banners opposite McDonalds – Contacted and asked businesses to remove. Any not removed were removed by us,

15. Cuckoo Pen

- a. Update on this project. – already discussed

16. Warwick Spinney

- a. Update on a possible crossing. – already discussed. Site for bridge is where there is least damage to vegetation (may need to remove 1 tree).

17. Footpaths.

- a. To discuss – Suggested to get a footpath warden (like they have in Warborough) – remit to go round looking at footpaths and spotting overgrown hedges. Council to consider whether remuneration possible. **Action** – put a note in the Benson Bulletin advertising for a footpath warden (plus possibly FB/website).

18. Items for Councillors to note or for the next agenda None

19. Any other business. None

Date of next meeting.

Thursday 10th July 2025



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