



Benson Parish Council

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

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

Recreation & Lands Committee

Membership:
Chair Councillor Patricia Baylis, Councillors R Castelow-Sturges, G McLauchlan, P Murray, R Moore and Tom Stevenson.

MINUTES OF THE BENSON PARISH COUNCIL RECREATION AND LANDS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE PARISH HALL ON THURSDAY 10th JULY 2025 AT 7.00PM

Present: Cllr Patricia Baylis, Cllr Robert Castelow-Sturges, Cllr Gavin McLauchlan, Cllr Roger Moore and Cllr Tom Stevenson.

Nicola Copland – Clerk

Members of the public - Edel McGurk

Layla Johnston

16th July 2025

1. Apologies and absences.

Apologies from Cllr P Murray.

2. 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. **None**

3. Public session

To allow members of the public to ask questions and address the Chairman.

(It should be noted that the time allocated for public participation is a total of 10 minutes for all those wishing to speak as per Council Standing Orders paragraph 3.f.)

4. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meetings of the Recreation and Lands Committee held on Thursday 9th June 2025 and sign as a true record of the meeting.

5. Actions from the last meeting.

- Paving around millstream – difficulty finding contractor – any ideas? Consider asking Aldridge Landscaping.
- History leaflet – c/f
- Basketball hoop – removed. Need to resolve how to sort it out.
- Aldridge Triangle tree canopy lift – in hand
- Planting scheme for Faye Elizabeth – c/f Cllr Baylis
- War Memorial kerb – Cllr McLauchlan to take up with OCC via new channel. See item 14A
- Village map – PB does not have it.



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- Litter picking group – in progress
- Interpretation boards – c/f Edel McGurk
- Footpath Warden – no response from village.

6. Green Spaces

a. Discuss the DWH document – Background is that DWH are keen to hand over to the PC some of the areas which they consider are ready. An examination of the area was carried out and the document produced which lists outstanding issues before handover such as dead trees, sharp stones etc. Edel McGurk came to talk through the issue. The document was handed to DWH who passed to contractors who in turn asked for a “to do” list. Note SODC not involved in handover on this occasion. Areas 7 & 8 are green space which people can actually use?

Action Next step is to extract the red items and put into a to-do list and send to contractor. Clerk to do this as needs to come from Council.

Cala have been prompted re the weedy area on the side of new relief road.

7. Skate Park

a Action Recommendation to Full Council -To appoint Trentwood Fencing to erect the black roll topped fencing around the perimeter of the skate park at a cost of £13,900 + VAT.

b. Any issues – Action - mowing required by skate park.

8. Rivermead.

a. Update on the refurbishment project – SLCC have made a proposal which was received just before the meeting so no time to evaluate. They suggest 2 options – either just an advisory service or a second more involved option where they liaise with stakeholders, contractors, planning etc.

Action - Call a meeting of the WG to discuss this once Councillors have had time to read the proposals as no R&L meeting until September.

b. Any issues – anti social behaviour (drug pushing) which has now moved to Co-op carpark, police have been notified.

9. Allotments

a. Report from Allotments Manager - report received. Discussed push button taps in place of water troughs – Committee preferred the use of troughs as people can put weights on taps to jam button down. **Action**-Consider lids on troughs to stem water evaporation in the exceptionally hot weather.

b. Update on the water meter – a water counter has been discovered by the paddock gate

Action Lee Brooks to check out what it is for.

ii. Discuss the Paddock rent rates – Deferred - to be discussed once measurement of water use resolved.

c. Update on possible bore holes – c/f

d. Any other issues – Drug dealers have been seen at the allotments.

10. Sunnyside



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- a. Update on Thames Water compound – Agreed split compound between top of Sunnyside and overflow carpark. Details of payment and contract to be decided.
- b. Any other issues – Litter on Sunnyside is still a problem.

11. Play Areas

- a. Any other issues – One issue over the way the gate opens on the Cala play park. **Action** - Take up with Cala. Also trees at St Helen's have died due to lack of water in extreme weather. Will replant later.

12. Waste and bins.

- a **Update** – Not yet carried out.

13. Discuss tree report for Millbrook Mead and the Cedars.

Action – carry out the work on the dangerous Ash and Willow as specified by the tree report. Regarding the Ash – it is not on PC land so cannot take the wood away. Leave in large chunks. Cut down willow and remove wood. **Action** - Email owner of the land. **Action** – RFO to investigate ownership of land.

Recommendation to Full Council that we appoint Benson Tree Services at a cost of no more than £3,000 plus VAT.

The Cedars – **Action** - defer decision to next Rec and Lands meeting to give time to revisit the complicated report. Put on next agenda.

14. General items.

- a. Update on the War Memorial – **Action** – go ahead with dropped kerb as long as use an OCC contractor. Possibly go back to Bewley Homes or Aldridge Landscaping.
- b. Discuss Interpretation Boards – c/f.

15. Cuckoo Pen

- a. **Recommendation to Full Council** to appoint Landy Girls to clear the Cuckoo Pen area, for a sum of up to £35k +VAT subject to a grant aid.
- b. Discuss the Knotweed issue – this is urgent and must be carried out by a specialist contractor. **Action** - Clerk to assess both quotes and go ahead. Money to be taken out of emergency tree fund.
Closure of permissive footpath will be communicated to village and Mrs Passey as part of paddock will be used for access.

16. Lady brook Bridge

- a. Update on a possible crossing – **Action** – Clerk to circulate the various bridge designs and options to Committee. Come to a consensus on type of bridge and then look for installation costs.

17. Footpaths.

- a. To discuss – No one has come forward to volunteer as a community footpath warden. Cllr Moore will consider whether he could take this on. Cllr McLauchlan walks his dogs daily and is prepared to help by walking different routes and looking at footpaths then put on FixMyStreet. The Footpath Warden is a co-ordinator role. Cllr Pattison to speak to the Warborough warden for advice.

18. Items for Councillors to note or for the next agenda.



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Put bollards at the scout hut on next agenda. Also missing bollards on Brook Street.
College Farm – put on next agenda.

19. Any other business.

Date of next meeting.

Thursday 11th September 2025.