



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 A MEETING OF THE BENSON PARISH COUNCIL
RECREATION AND LANDS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE PARISH HALL
ON THURSDAY 20th NOVEMBER 2025 AT 7.00PM**

Present: Cllr Patricia Baylis (Chair), Cllr William Pattison, Cllr Robert Castelow-Sturges, Cllr Gavin McLauchlan, Cllr Phil Murray, Cllr Roger Moore and Cllr Tom Stevenson.

Nicola Copland - Clerk

Layla Johnston
25 November 2025

1. Apologies and absences - None

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.

3. Public session

No members of the public attended.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meetings of the Recreation and Lands Committee held on Thursday 11th September 2025 and sign as a true record of the meeting.

5. Actions from the last meeting.

- Paving millstream – completed
 - Oxfordshire Together – awaiting map. GMcL has resubmitted query with OCC.
 - Skate Park fencing – completed
 - Rivermead – 4 x CCTV warning signs in place)
 - Rivermead electric box – b/f BP
 - Reprinting leaflet – b/f TS
 - Trees – Cedars – asked for layman's summary of report. **Action** – CLK to find a tree surgeon to come and look (accompanied by TS/RC-S).
 - Green Spaces map – PM started task. c/f
 - Allotments – water meter **Action** - write to Mrs Passey to warn her in advance about use of lower end of Paddock.
 - Allotment Oak Tree – TPO refused **Action** – PB to raise with Cllr Andrea Powell. Add to allotment agreement that no damage should be done to areas outside their allotment.
- Action-** investigate erecting some chestnut paling fencing around the tree to provide the protection.



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Recommendation to Full Council-that Benson Parish Council resolve to protect the Oak Tree on the allotments.

- Basketball Hoop – **Action**-ask ground staff to remove the 2 rusty poles. Agreed not to replace until someone queries/asks for a replacement.

- Aldridge Triangle – Tree canopy lift – TS waiting for Darren to contact him.

Edging stones – waiting for public art

Residents mowing – on agenda

- Cala green spaces – management plans received – on agenda

- Planting in play areas –B/f Darren to do with Patricia.

Fencing at St Helen's – PB/TS/Clerk to re look at it – arrange site meeting.

- Cala park gate to be reversed

- War Memorial drop kerb – progressing

- Waste bins – ordered

- Overhaul notice boards at Bob's Corner – c/f

- Village map

- Interpretation boards – on agenda

- Scout hut lockable bollards – b/f

- Parking at College Farm – RFO checking garage ownership. Considering limiting time but can't police it. Resident bays should not be marked out in the car park as parking was provided by way of garages but many residents had decided to sell their garage. **Action** RFO to check legality.

Get more info

Ladybrook Bridge – on agenda

Footpath warden – **Action** -RM to forward OCC email to GMcL for follow up & get clarity on who is responsible for footpaths. PM said the footpaths officer is responsible but they do not have time to walk the paths. Keith Tibbs has offered to take this on as he walks the paths a lot. **Action** PM/RM to contact Keith Tibbs

6. New Green Spaces

a. Discuss the next steps for the management of the Green Spaces

Members of committee need to review the management plans in place and start to consider how to manage the new nature park. Propose a drop-in session for residents to discuss.

Cllr McLauchlan reported he had met with Cala residents this week and they have asked to be communicated to regarding the handover of green spaces and what this would mean for them.

Key concerns for Cala 1 & 2 residents is the SUDs attenuation ponds. BPC not taking these on but who is?

Currently Cala 1 residents are paying management fees to the management consultants, Remus. Remus outsource the green space management. The land will eventually transfer to the Residents Association and Remus will be dropped.

Cala 2 have a similar arrangement – the arrangement is such that SODC sit between BPC and Cala and will ultimately sign it off. Anne Richardson is the SODC manager for the process.

Another consideration is what the approvals will look like if we move to a unitary authority.

DWH – different set up and BPC has had meetings with the commercial and site managers. In this case BPC are in control of the approval process. There is an ongoing problem with flints rising to surface which DWH have spent money trying to resolve. DWH spaces will come to BPC with commuted sums. In case of Cala – BPC asked to take the green spaces.

Action – Split this review into two projects - existing/current green spaces and new green spaces. Review of current green space management plans should be done for next meeting. Councillors to read and come back with comments to the meeting. Consider setting up a green space subcommittee to discuss. **Action** Cllr Baylis to work further on this.



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7. Skate Park

- a. Any issues - Fence completed. **Action** - Spring closures needed on the gates.

8. Rivermead.

- a. Update on the refurbishment project.

Initial report from Phil Woodward was circulated. Suggests using the preliminary market engagement route (would involve withdrawing the planning application) which means putting out a skeleton tender to get a feeling about what we could have, which contractors are interested and likely cost.

Action – confirm to Full Council that this Committee would like to go ahead with this project as per Phil Woodward's report. Cllr Pattison to withdraw PA. Missing appendices to be circulated

- b. No further issues

9. Allotments

- a. Report from Allotments Manager – no report.

b. To discuss email received from a parishioner. **Action** Check if grounds team have carried out any work at all on the beech tree. Cllr Baylis will respond to the parishioner to say looking into the issue. Tanya to remind allotment holders that rubbish needs to be removed. Communication notice to this effect will be put on the new noticeboards.

- c. Any other issues. Cllr McLauchlan reported he may have found some allotment holders willing to run an allotment association.

Hedgerow – Unfortunately no trees survived because of the extremely dry summer. Cllr Stevenson would not want to replant in Spring in case of a repeat. Replanting would be better in Autumn. Suggested grounds team could possibly water using the bowser which we have.

10. Sunnyside

- a. Update on Thames Water compound – BPC agreed to a compound extension at top of Sunnyside for a fee. No impact on football pitches. The car park has been damaged by the large lorries using it. Photos have been taken as evidence, and we have asked the site agent to protect the surface going forward and also for a full re-instatement.

b. Any other issues. Kicking Wall – boarded up as inspected and deemed unsafe. **Action**-Mesh needs mending and replacing.

11. Play Areas

- a. **Review** - St Helen's fencing quote – already discussed

b. Any other issues - none

12. Waste and bins.

a Update – Have received complaints that some dog poo bins are overflowing. **Action** – Clerk to circulate Shield's report with the What3words location of each bin. Everyone to monitor where the problem areas are and feedback for consideration for extra bins. Clerk to replace 2 bins which are always overflowing near the Parish Hall and Hale Road with larger 60L bins (currently 40L). Bin near relief road ordered.

13. Management Plans – Discussed

14. General items.



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- a. Update on the War Memorial – already discussed.
- b. Discuss Interpretation Boards – b/f
- c. Discuss renewing the Azalea grass cutting contract for another year, at a cost of £5,667.

Action Recommendation to Full Council that BPC employ Azalea for a further year's contract at a cost of £5,667.

15. Cuckoo Pen

- a. Update on this project - awaiting grant funding decision

16. Ladybrook Bridge

a. Update on a bridge **Action** Committee agreed metal and reclaimed plastic decking flat bridge. Cllr Pattison to go ahead and get a definitive price for the bridge so can go ahead to get builders spec.

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

Cllr McLauchlan noted that the active travel consultation was now live.

Cllr Baylis raised the idea that the meetings are held either during the day or earlier on. **Action** - Agreed to trial this for the January 2026 meeting which would be held on 15th January at 10am.

18. Any other business.

Millbrook Mead – **Action** - Cllr Stevenson needs to sign the papers – now urgent.

Clearing of Benson Brook banks – part of Cuckoo Pen project is opening up a vista down onto the brook. Recommendation from the Chiltern Chalk Streams group (a subgroup of Chiltern National Landscapes) is that a metre of undisturbed vegetation along the bank must be left and the bank must not be modified. **Action** Set up a site visit and ask the Chiltern Chalk Streams group to attend for advice along with Cllr Stevenson and the RFO.

Date of next meeting.

Thursday 15th January 2025 at **10am**