



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 12th MARCH 2026 AT 10AM

Present: Cllr Patricia Baylis (Chair), Cllr William Pattison, Cllr Tom Stevenson, Cllr McLauchlan

Nicola Copland – Clerk
Daren Tame – Grounds

Layla Johnston
17th March 2026

1. Apologies and absences

Apologies received from Cllrs Murray and Moore.

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 declared.

3. Public session

No questions from members of the public.

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 15th January 2026 and sign as a true record of the meeting.

5. Actions from the last meeting.

- Rivermead project – on agenda
- Rivermead trees – pollarded
- History leaflet – C/F
- Cedars – on agenda
- Green spaces – on agenda
- Allotments – on agenda
- Faye Elizabeth planting plan – C/F
- St Helen's fencing - book visit PB/TS/Clerk
- Noticeboards at Bob's Corner – agreed to source a new smart wooden one but consider at least the posts being a wood alternative to give it a longer lifespan. If wooden must be hard wood and should be treated every year to stop it rotting. **Action** Darren to check out Oakwood Joinery (by the Tip) and Wysteria Joinery at Shillingford.
- Village Map redrawing – looking for someone new to redraw the map.
- Interpretation boards – C/F
- Scout hut – lockable bollards C/F as not clear what is happening with the scout hut.
- Parking at College Farm – on agenda
- Ladybrook bridge – on agenda



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- Footpath Warden – GMcL following up
- Millbrook Mead papers – ?
- Clearing brook banks – TS to try and make contact again with Chalk Stream Society
- Sunnyside trees overhanging road – roadside done and will complete rest of job in September.
- War Memorial – awaiting permission from War Graves Commission
- Trail cameras/CCTV – being used to track Hazel & Jefferies lorries. Use at Rivermead as a temporary solution.
- Cuckoo Pen – on agenda

6. New Green Spaces

- a. Discuss the next steps for the management of the Green Spaces and the current issues. First step is to discuss the financial options available to BPC before making a plan. Meeting to be arranged Cllrs Baylis, Murray RFO and Clerk. Cala reverting to original s106 and green spaces therefore transferring green spaces to management company and/or residents.
- b. Discuss the outstanding issues on DWH, and an update on the land transfer Cllr Murray has asked DWH for a copy of the Land Registry transfer application.
- c. Discuss the procuring of birdsmouth fencing on the nature area – see above
- d. Any other issues - none

7. Skate Park

- a. Discuss graffiti on the skate bowl – This was raised by a resident at Cala. The only graffiti is “no mountain bikes”. It was agreed that unless the graffiti is offensive we would leave it.
- b. Any other issues – Noted gates continually left open. **Action** Consider sign on inside of gate. Cllr McLauchlan and Cllr Castelow-Sturges joined the meeting.

8. Rivermead.

- a. Discuss the latest report from the project manager.

Update following recent meeting with Phil Woodward the PM. The Committee agreed ideally it would be a pool not a splash pad. Phil Woodward to contact local landscapers. Idea to hold a drop in event for consultation. Clerk raised issue of changing the APM into a community event. Cllr McLauchlan reported that some parishioners at the Councillors Surgery suggested a “Freshers Fair” type event which could be tied in with the APM.

- b. Discuss the drainage quotes.

Phil Woodward confirmed that the full drainage survey would not be required.

- c. Any issues.

9. Allotments

- a. Report from Allotments Manager – More active management of plots needed (monitoring if they are being worked). Clerk still needs to work on updating Tenancy Agreement.
- b. Any other issues - none

10. Sunnyside

- a. Any issues. The hedge along Hale Road didn't get cut this year. This was probably due to the ongoing Thames Water work and would need to be b/f for September as cutting period missed. Consider replacement of dead slips – **Action** TS to look into it. Noted Barhale have redone the overflow carpark. Clerk meeting Barhale to walk around Sunnyside to check footpaths and reinstatement work needed.



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11. Play Areas

- a. **Discuss** St Helen's fencing quote – deferred until the meeting to look at the area has taken place.
- b. Any other issues. The Leap on Cala – plants and seesaw done but can Cala put the loops on the gates. **Action** – Speak to Cllr Murray.

12. Waste and bins.

- a Discuss bin provision on CALA, DWH and at The Crown.
New bin near Ladybrook bridge is being actively used.
Committee considered other areas needing bins - No bins along new relief road. **Action** Clerk to speak to Mick Brown to see whether bins will be installed by OCC ahead of opening.
Bins on DWH – deferred as no confirmation of BPC ownership yet.
Bin needed on Crown Square (by the Crown Pub) – agreed to go ahead. **Action** – Cllr Baylis/Clerk/Darren to look at location
Other locations suggested include Aldridge Triangle, St Helen's Avenue, the paths leading to the A4074 and the bus stop on Church Road. Two new dog bins will need to be provided on the Cala nature park.
Darren raised problem of people putting home waste into the bins. **Action** – Layla to put out communication on this.
- b Any other issues – Cllr Baylis would like to look into commercial litter picking options. Cllrs discussed getting a huge skip from Grundon once a year for residents to dump rubbish in. Would this just encourage people outside Benson to dump stuff as soon as they found out? It would demonstrate an understanding of the issues surrounding litter and waste and show that we are trying to do something about it. If abused, it will be a one-off gesture.
Tunnel under the relief road – full of broken glass and human waste. Darren confirmed that there are problems with human waste around the Community Hall as well. Mesh needs to be put up to stop people going in there but not sure who is responsible for it, OCC? **Action**-Clerk to find out

- 13. **The Cedars-** Update and next steps. Tree roots still an issue. Have been contacted by Chris Rea with a plan but Clerk needed to look into it further. Darren had reported the tree roots on FixMyStreet. **Action** Darren to give the report number to Cllr McLauchlan so he can to put it on the Councillor platform which requires a 48 hour response.
Bringing down the height of the tree is work in progress and will be continued in September. Cllr Castelow-Sturges mentioned that there are other trees which also need attention as they dropped debris onto cars. **Action**-Cllr Baylis to go and look. It was suspected that the roots could be reduced without affecting stability of tree but expert advice needed.
Cllr Pattison said the land had originally been bought from SODC for £1 and came with the restriction that can't do anything for 25 years. Need to check how long it has been.

14. College Farm.

- a Discuss rubbish removal – BPC had paid to have rubbish removed but unfortunately some has now reappeared. Darren suggested getting rid of rubbish and clearing up the whole area. Also put up signs saying this area is being monitored. **Action** – grounds team

- 15. b. Discuss the possible installation of a gate or CCTV/trail Cam. **Action** Investigate and get costings for installing a gate plus installation of CCTV.
c. Parking - discuss deterrents to stop people parking all day.



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Action-Start by putting signs up saying parking limited to 2 hours and distribute letters to residents outlining new restrictions. Mention in Benson Bulletin. Revisit the layout of the parking to see if changing it to diagonal would enable more cars to park? OCC Parking Inspector might be able to help advise on this.

15. General items.

- a. Update on the War Memorial – **Action**-Clerk to check planning
 - b. Discuss Interpretation Boards – Check with Edel as she is working on it.
 - c. Discuss the deteriorating road surface at Preston Crowmarsh – the large pothole has been filled this morning. Continual heavy vehicle movement from the work on the weir has affected the road. There is going to be an inspection of the whole road. Clerk has contacted the EA regarding this. Cllr McLauchlan says that this is not BPC's responsibility and should be batted back.
 - d Any other issues. Cllr Baylis to find out what machinery Gloucestershire CC are currently using to repair potholes more quickly and efficiently than Oxfordshire.
- Mobility Hub – Cllr Pattison asked if Cllr McLauchlan could try and find out what is happening with the hub as this will affect what is needed at Rivermead in the way of toilets, footpaths etc
- Environment Agency Weir project – need to find out what is happening about the re-instatement of the flood meadow. **Action** – Clerk to contact Paul Warrington at EA.
- Action** - Update on Weir reopening – put message out to village

16. Cuckoo Pen

- a. Update on this project – the area has been cleared by the Landy Girls, however, they have established that the membrane covers the whole area and will therefore require more skips than thought to dispose of it. They will use a digger. A meeting has been set up for Tuesday 17th at 10am to discuss how to proceed next. There is £3k left in the budget. Edel McGurk is also visiting the site and will give some ideas. The knotweed treatment plan means that the far area of site cannot be dug for 5 years and therefore cannot be used for allotments.

17. Ladybrook Bridge

- a. Update on a bridge – complicated by the fact that the bridge manufacturers do not give information on what is needed to put the bridge onto. Already agreed that should go ahead with the flatbed bridge. **Action** - Cllr Pattison to go ahead with Bison and get a quote then ask them to put together a plan, then proceed with planning application.

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

- Cllr Stevenson raised the path running past the Cuckoo Pen. Chippings need replacing with a gravel path or boarding.

19. Any other business - None

Date of next meeting.

Thursday 21st May 2026 10:30am



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