



Benson Parish Council

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

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

Full Council

Membership:

Councillor William Pattison (Chair), Councillor Patricia Baylis (Vice Chair), Councillor Robert Castelow-Sturges, Councillor David Dawkins, Councillor Rob Jordan, Councillor Fiona Lovesey, Councillor Gavin McLauchlan, Councillor Roger Moore, Councillor Phillip Murray, Councillor Ian Skeels, Councillor Tom Stevenson, Councillor Michael Winton.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL HELD AT THE PARISH HALL BENSON ON THURSDAY 23rd JULY 2026 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr P Baylis (Vice chair), Cllr R Castelow-Sturges, Cllr R Jordan, Cllr F Lovesey, Cllr R Moore, Cllr P Murray, Cllr I Skeels and Cllr T Stevenson.

Nicola Copland – Clerk

Edel McGurk, Tracey Comber BANG

Izzy Thompson - Henley Standard

Layla Johnston
31st July 2026

1. Apologies and absences.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Pattison, Dawkins, McLauchlan and Winton.

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 (i.e., to stay in the meeting, to leave the meeting or stay in the meeting to make representations and then leave the meeting prior to any considerations or determinations of the item).

3. To receive written reports from the following:

- a. OCC Cllr G McLauchlan – Report circulated at the beginning of the month
- b. SODC Cllrs S Cooper and A Powell - Report circulated. Cllr Murray asked if SODC had any sizeable parcels of land which could help the Parish towards affordable housing. Cllr Powell did not think there were any as they were mostly small areas not taken on by SOHA but they would look.

4. Public session

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

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

Item 13 was brought forward.

Edel McGurk Chair BANG and Benson Community Green Spaces Trust and Tracey Comber BANG volunteer co-ordinator gave a presentation on investing in green spaces as key community assets, investing in volunteers and the importance of these spaces in



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communities such as Benson (and the surrounding parishes). They talked about the importance of volunteers and nature champions and working together in partnership with the PC and other organisations. Details on the presentation which would be available afterwards.

Funding for Benson Area Nature Group.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve a request from BANG for a contribution of £2268 to fund more staffing hours, to be paid from either grant funding or reserves.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting on the 25th June 2026 as a true record of the meeting.

6. Exclusion of the Public to discuss an item.

Vote to resolve that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the business, the Press and Public be excluded from the items at the end of this meeting.

7. Updates on previous actions.

Community Assets – on agenda

Men's toilet door – fixed

People's Emergency briefing film – liaise with Ewelme as they also wish to screen it.

Comms – discussed later

Scouts would move from Cllr Stevenson to McLauchlan.

8. Benson Parish Council Committees.

a. Finance and Staffing Committee

i **To receive** a report from the Chair of the Finance and Staffing Committee.

As per our annual requirement – Cllr Rob Jordan was elected committee chair for a further year. Our internal audit final report was reviewed and the actions points noted. This brings our contract with Council audits to an end and we have selected Mulberry as our preferred new auditor – they already audit Henley, Wallingford and Cholsey and are highly recommended.

We have continued to discuss the Tennis Club complaint about the tree roots and have received a formal visual report showing without doubt that the roots are under the courts and are raising the surface. The club want us to pay for installation of a root barrier at a cost of around £10k but it's not that simple. The whole situation has been passed to our insurers, and their initial feedback is that the tennis club don't have a valid claim, particularly not under

the terms of the old lease. However, there are a number of really interesting legal subtleties in this case and it has been passed to their legal department to see if there is any way a



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claim could progress. In the meantime, the tennis club are carrying out a feasibility study to see if they could operate the courts on an open pay as you play basis thus opening the facility to the community, which we are more likely to support.

The transfer of the green spaces from DWH is still in progress. We can't accept them until legal title is transferred and the commuted sums are released.

Grant applications have been put in for the solar panels and the drop kerb at the war memorial.

Preferred architects have been identified for the pavilion project. The Clerk will be consulting Phil Woodward for assistance with the contract process.

Lastly interviews for the role of assistant clerk will take place w/c 3rd August. There has been a great response to the role and some quality candidates have been shortlisted.

ii It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd initially for one year.

iii It was **RESOLVED** to engage with Mackenzie Wheeler as the preferred supplier for architectural services for the Pavilion project, as chosen through the Contract Finder tender process

iv Councillors **NOTED** receipt of final Internal Audit report from 2025-26 and the action points contained therein.

b Planning Committee

i To receive a report from the Chair of the Planning Committee.

c. Halls Committee

i To receive a report from the Chair of the Halls Committee.

Tanya our Facilities Manager will be leaving this week so not much to report. A new dishwasher has been ordered for the parish hall. Cllrs will have noted that the automatic doors are not working and are in the process of getting fixed.

d. Recreation and Lands Committee.

i To receive a report from the Chair of the Recreation and Lands Committee

The Cuckoo Pen refurb is moving ahead – there has been some discussion about trees and what to source. Cllr Baylis reported that the Landy Girls removed a total of 80 tonnes of membrane and rubbish from the site during the clearance.



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e. Awards Committee.

i To receive a report from the Chair - Nothing to report at this time.

9. Benson Parish Council Working Groups and Outside Bodies

a. Neighbourhood Plan Delivery Team

i. To receive a report from the Chair of the NPDT WG

Discussions over transfer of green spaces (mentioned in item 8ai)

b. Parish Events Working Group.

i To receive a report from the Chair of the Parish Events WG.

The first meeting has taken place to discuss the village Christmas event – Marie Finch and Nicola Hewitt (parishioners) have agreed to organise this event and will be paid for the work.

c. Transport Representative

i. To receive a report from the Transport Representative

Cllr Murray updated that we are pushing for date of opening of the relief road and that the Mobility Hub is progressing with announcement due soon.

d. Communications and Engagement Working Group.

i. To receive a report from the Chair of the Communications and Engagement WG.

Following the last FC meeting where there had been quite a lot of discussion on communication channels, emails and TikTok, Cllr Skeels had a session with Layla to talk about everything raised at the meeting.

Warborough Email was mentioned but he pointed out it was a much smaller village - less than 20% the size of Benson.

BPC does currently have an email group. It has 153 subscribers (which is less than 3% of the population) but email is becoming less used by the younger generations. We talked about the various ways we could potentially increase the number of people using it. Most of our social media is concentrated on Facebook which is appropriate for the demographic we need. We now have 1170 followers on FB and also post to the Community Facebook (2.9k followers) and Chiltern Grange group (almost 500 followers). So we are getting messages out on FB to a good proportion of the community. We also have our website.

We talked about Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn and it's a question of how much time you can spend on this. Layla only works 16 hours a week and a lot more time is needed to create content for these platforms. We did talk about WhatsApp and sharing posts directly to WhatsApp groups straight from Facebook – this is something we would explore.

e. Public Art Fund Working group.



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i To receive a report and an update from the Chair of the Public Art Fund WG. –
Nothing to report.

f. CIL Working group.

i To receive a report from the Chair of the CIL WG – It is likely that the CIL funds are fully allocated on current projects.

g. Road safety Working group.

i To receive a report from the Chair of the Road Safety WG – Benson Speedwatch not much happening as not enough people due to holidays and extreme heat. Order placed for new SID for Brook St. Clerk trying to place order for ANPR camera which will mean less people needed for speed watch sessions.

h. Rivermead Working Group.

To receive a report from the Chair of the Rivermead WG – progressing. Bus shelter demolished.

i. Pavilion Working Group.

To receive a report from the Chair of the Pavilion WG – nothing to discuss.

10. Finance

- a. It was **RESOLVED** to approve **and sign** the reconciled bank statements for the current account as of 30th June 2026.
- b. It was **RESOLVED** to approve payments for July 2026.
- c. It was **CONFIRMED** that a Councillor has checked and signed the monthly invoices.

11. Correspondence

- a. To review correspondence received

Various road closures - communicated.

Request from Cllr Cooper for a bus stop at Fifield Barns. Cllrs supported idea.

Cllr Moore raised the issue of the bus stop opposite Blacklands Road which has nowhere to stand and no shelter. Action - Cllr Baylis said she would go and look with the Clerk.

Youtube video from Saxofest regarding their fundraising. Action - Resend as Cllrs unable to open.

June OALC newsletter has been circulated.

b. To review Parish Office Notes – Reconfirm interviewing for new staff member next week. Cllrs were asked to bear in mind that the office is now one staff member down and with a lot of staff on holiday so to please be patient.

12. Grants.

a. **Friends of Benson Library** – A request for a grant of £4458 towards the continuation of a library in Benson by contributing to staffing costs. It was **RESOLVED** to approve a grant of £4458 for Friends of Benson Library.



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13. Funding for Benson Area Nature Group. To discuss and resolve a request from BANG for a contribution of £2268 to fund more staffing hours, to be paid from either grant funding or reserves - Discussed earlier.

The planning item was brought forward. Members of the public were asked to leave as this would be a confidential session.

Elivia outline planning application

Cllr Murray has met with the planning officer Emma Bowman at SODC and Judith Goodwin OCC transport officer. The deadline for BPC response is 30th July. Draft response has been circulated for comments. Input is welcomed. BPC are objecting strongly for a number of reasons one of which is the delay to the relief road.

Cllr Murray thinking about the next version of the NP which will be needed by March 2028 but takes at least a year to put together and at 3-6 months to get it through the system. It may need a referendum.

14. Discuss Assets of Community Value – BPC does not have any assets of Community value eg a building which the community feel is of asset to the village and would give the Council an opportunity to buy the asset

15. Questions to the Chair.

No questions to the Chair.

16. Items for Councillors to note.

Cllr Baylis asked Cllrs whether they would agree to the request from the owner of the famous “Littleworth Road” grey cat to put a small commemorative statue in Bertie Westfield. This cat had lived for many years and was well known to everyone living around Littleworth Road and slept in Bertie Westfield most nights.

17 The date of the next Full Council meeting. Thursday 24th September 2026.

18. Dates of next meetings.

Planning Committee TBA

Finance Committee Tuesday 15th September. 6pm

Halls Committee -Tuesday 8th September 7pm.

Recreation and Lands Committee Thursday 17th September 10.30am.

Awards Committee TBA



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7 July 2026 (2026-2027)

Benson Parish Council

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

A	Bank Reconciliation at 30/06/2026		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2026		2,533,429.14
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2026 - 30/06/2026		222,805.29
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2026 - 30/06/2026		2,756,234.43 123,058.55
	Cash in Hand 30/06/2026 (per Cash Book)		2,633,175.88
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 30/06/2026	0.00	
	1 Unity Trust Bank Current Account 30/06/2026	761,273.73	
	2 Unity Trust CIL Account 31/05/2026	1,597,009.28	
	1220Coop Public Sector Reserve £ 31/05/2026	12,637.26	
	1230 CoopProject Funds 61008971 31/05/2026	126,707.56	
	Cheques Awaiting Banking 31/05/2026	0.00	
	Stripe 31/05/2026	0.00	
	3 Unity Trust Bloomfield Account 31/05/2026	60,070.18	
	CCLA 31/05/2026	0.00	
	6 Coop Current 61008959 31/05/2026	75,277.34	
			2,632,975.35
	Less unrepresented payments		3.67
			2,632,971.68
	Plus unrepresented receipts		129.20
	Adjusted Bank Balance		2,633,100.88
Error A does NOT equal B			
ERROR IS £75.00			



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CARD							
153	20.06.2026	£19.00	£3.80	£22.80	Image copyright	Shutterstock	CARD
154	20.06.2026	£15.00	£3.00	£18.00	phones	Giff Gaff	CARD
155	20.06.2026	£22.95	£4.59	£27.54	e reception services	E-Receptionist	CARD
169	20.06.2026	£27.50	£5.50	£33.00	Legal Docs system	Law Depot	CARD
178	20.06.2026	£454.88	£90.96	£545.84	Amazon purchases - see invoices	Amazon	CARD
181	20.06.2026	£180.00	£0.00	£180.00	annual licence	South Oxfordshire District Council	CARD
182	20.06.2026	£34.90	£6.98	£41.88	prints for APM	ClickPost	CARD
183	11.06.2026	£38.16	£7.63	£45.79	Van and mower fuel	BP	CARD
184	20.06.2026	£26.57	£5.31	£31.88	Carburetta for strimmer	Ebay	CARD
185	20.06.2026	£9.82	£1.96	£11.78	mail chimp subs	Mailchimp	CARD
186	20.06.2026	£91.54	£18.31	£109.85	Sprinkler	Waterpump.co.uk	CARD
187	20.06.2026	£28.00	£0.00	£28.00	land registry search	LandRegistry	CARD
ONLINE							
141	20.06.2026	£11,398.63	£0.00	11,398.63	salaries	Staff	ONLINE
148	20.06.2026	£3,045.63	£0.00	£3,045.63	Pension	OCC Pension Fund	ONLINE
149	20.06.2026	£4,648.78	£0.00	£4,648.78	PAYE Etc	HMRC Cumbernauld	ONLINE
150	20.06.2026	£600.00	£0.00	£600.00	cleaning	Clear View Window cleaning	ONLINE
151	20.06.2026	£259.02	£51.81	£310.83	HR	Peninsula	ONLINE
152	20.06.2026	£51.48	£10.30	£61.78	photocopier	Clarity Copiers Ltd	ONLINE



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161	20.06.2026	£180.58	£36.12	£216.70	waste removal	Grundon Waste Management Limited	ONLINE
167	20.06.2026	£182.00	£36.40	£218.40	Dog Bin Emptying	Shield Maintenance	ONLINE
172	20.06.2026	£253.00	£50.60	£303.60	Repair mens urinal	LB Plumbing	ONLINE
173	20.06.2026	£1,977.50	£395.50	£2,373.00	Bat Survey	NatureBureau	ONLINE
174	20.06.2026	£2,031.45	£406.29	£2,437.74	Rivermead project management	SLCC	ONLINE
175	20.06.2026	£2,761.71	£552.34	£3,314.05	Electricity all properties	Southern Electric Power Distribution plc	ONLINE
176	20.06.2026	£10.20	£2.04	£12.24	Wire	Colliers of Crowmarsh Ltd	ONLINE
177	20.06.2026	£100.00	£20.00	£120.00	Fire alarm service	Barr Fire Alarm Services	ONLINE
188	20.06.2026	£17.68	£3.53	£21.21	putty	Steve Mowlem	ONLINE
189	20.06.2026	£105.54	£21.11	£126.65	plants for large planters	Purely Plants	ONLINE
190	20.06.2026	£525.00	£105.00	£630.00	Internal audit final	Auditing Solutions	ONLINE
191	20.06.2026	£70.63	£14.13	£84.76	repairs to FE play equipment	HAGS	ONLINE
192	20.06.2026	£4,750.00	£950.00	£5,700.00	repairs to roof valley PV	Longpine	ONLINE
193	20.06.2026	£20.83	£4.17	£25.00	Clerk expenses	PC Technicians	ONLINE
194	20.06.2026	£52.71	£10.54	66.95	A Field expenses	Anna Field	ONLINE
196	20.06.2026	£489.60	£97.92	£587.52	Fire shutter servicing	Behind Closed Doors	ONLINE



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					Refurbish Bobs corner		
197	20.06.2026	£464.72	£0.00	£464.72	noticeboard	Steve Mowlem	ONLINE
199	22.06.2026	£388.97	£77.79	£466.76	PAT testing	UK Safety Management Ltd	ONLINE
200	23.06.2026	£90.00	£0.00	£90.00	fitting new hand dryer in CH	Martyn Ottery : Electrical services	ONLINE
201	22.06.2026	£28.80	0	28.80	Refund for room change	OFWI	ONLINE