

HERMITAGE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting of Hermitage Parish Council held at
Adelaide Room, Holy Trinity Church, Hermitage, Berkshire RG18 9ST
on Thursday 15th May 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr R Cottingham, Cllr I Govier, Cllr D Brown, Cllr V Burgess, Cllr J Rigby, Cllr A Goldsmith, Cllr A Williams Ms N Pierce (clerk).

01.05.25 Election of Chairman for forthcoming year

Cllr Goldsmith, Cllr John Rigby and Cllr Govier were nominated. Cllr Rigby declined to stand. A vote was held. Cllr Goldsmith was elected
The elected Chairman signed a new Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

The new Chairman suspended Standing Orders to thank Cllr Cottingham for her long service in the role. She also advised that she would need to leave early, so would adjust the agenda as necessary to first consider some issues.

02.05.25 Election of Vice Chairman for forthcoming year

Cllr Govier and Cllr Rigby were nominated but Cllr Govier was not seconded. Cllr Rigby was therefore elected.
The elected Vice Chair signed a new Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

03.05.25 Acceptance of Standing Orders

The Standing Orders were accepted.
The chairman noted that the SO agreed by Council earlier in the year had not been signed, i.e. adopted. But since NALC has issued a new model incorporating legal changes, these must be further updated in line with the new NALC model.
The Standing Orders to be reviewed and redrafted.

Cllr Goldsmith

04.05.25 Acceptance of Financial Regulations

The Financial Regulations were accepted. The Chairman noted that it was some time since they had been issued, so might need review to ensure consistency with legislation.
Financial Regs to be reviewed.

Cllr Burgess, Cllr Cottingham, Clerk

05.05.25 Councillors' roles

The councillors' roles have been circulated. Model SO only require confirmation of representation at outside bodies to be considered at the annual meeting. So, the Chairman suggested that other bodies should be deferred to save time.

To add to June agenda

Clerk

Cllr Brown agreed to continue with Patient Representation Group

Cllrs' Govier and Rigby agreed to continue with Village Hall trustees' meetings

Ordinary Meeting

06.05.25 Public participation

Two residents spoke about Cllr Co-option, one resident attended to listen to the meeting.

07.05.25 Apologies for absence

Cllr H Codling, Cllr P Dick.

08.05.25 Minutes of meeting held on 17th April 2025

The minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

09.05.25 Minutes of APA meeting held on 24th April 2025

The minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

10.05.25 Declarations of interest

None.

11.05.25 Actions agreed and matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting not referred to elsewhere and actions list

Discussion of Actions was deferred to the end of the meeting to confirm that these had been discussed under the relevant headings, which was confirmed at that point.

12.05.25 Reports

12.1 District Councillors

None. WBC intention to empty black bins every three weeks was noted.

12.2 Chairman's report

Cllr Cottingham's report was noted and is appended to these minutes.

13.05.25 Planning

13.1 New Applications:

25/00934/HOUSE, Pine Lodge, Deacons Lane, Hermitage, Thatcham RG18 9RJ. Single storey side and rear extension including first floor side extension to form bedroom. **No objection.** The Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan policies and Design Code need addressing, particularly the following: Policy HER2C, Policy Her 4A & B, Hermitage Design Code DCO3.

13.2 Decision notices:

None.

13.3 00815 Consider draft deposition for the planning inquiry

Councillors were pleased with the text provided by the Consultant and agreed to accept it.

Payment of the associated fee of the order of £250 was agreed.

Cllr Cottingham agreed to attend the 4-day inquiry.

Ruth Cottingham

The chairman brought the following items forward and she needed to leave the meeting early and wanted to discuss these as a priority.

18.3 APA 24th April

Minutes circulated and on website.

18.3.1 Quality Improvement Plan from resident's Survey April 2025

Cllrs thanked Cllr Rigby for his work on this, though noting that this would require significant extra work. It was agreed that this would best be addressed by forming a Working party: Cllrs Rigby, Burgess and Williams volunteered for this role.

Report back to Council

Cllr Rigby or leader of working party.

Agenda item to be renamed Action plan from resident's survey April 2025

Clerk.

18.4 Hermitage Community Event

Cllr Govier advised that he was not willing to continue organising this because of the lack of support, which he had requested by email 2 weeks previously. He confirmed that he had not advised the other parties of his decision. HPC agreed that, given the limited progress and time remaining, it would support his proposal to cancel the event. Councillors would like to consider holding something next year but noted that HPC would need to allow for it when preparing the budget so an outline proposal would be needed when requested: that had not been done this year.

Councillor Rigby chaired the meeting from this point on.

14.05.25 Finance and report of Responsible Finance Officer**Financial position as of 31st April 2025**

Balance carried forward (Inc. S106 contributions)	£240,206.86
Receipts to 31 st April	£32,002.65
Authorised Payments to 31 st April	£15,910.20
Payment not processed by 31 st April	£4,050.00
Balance in hand (total)	£260,349.31

14.1 Report of Financial Officer (Clerk's report)

Noted. No comments or questions.

14.2 Payments for consideration May 2025

The following were approved.

14.2.1	Sunshine Commercial Services Ltd monthly charge	£331.56
14.2.2	Grass maintenance/Contractor	£841.25
14.2.3	Cost of administration	£1,226.60
14.2.4	HMRC, tax and NI	£230.28
14.2.5	Administration expenses, ink, box folder, Microsoft 365 (£104.99)	£148.63
14.2.6	Tactical Management Ltd, dog bins (April)	£242.94
14.2.7	HALC annual subscription	£473.86
14.2.8	Ruth Cottingham, APA refreshments and memorial plaque	£95.23
14.2.9	Heelis & Lodge, internal audit	£273.32
Total	All approved, and endorsed online	£3,863.67

14.3 Direct Debits previously approved

Noted.

1&1 Ionos (website) monthly payment	£26.40
NEST monthly payment	£111.01

14.4 Receipts April 2025

Precept £31,750, CCLA interest £252.65.

14.5 To accept Internal Audit 2024-25 report

Accepted. The council thanked the Clerk for the quality of her work, which had been complemented by the auditor.

14.6 To consider transferring funds from Metro to Lloyds

To transfer balance over £85,000 and anticipated interest for the forthcoming year to Lloyd's account.

Clerk

14.7 To consider transferring funds from Lloyds current account to deposit account

To transfer £40,000 to deposit account, to review again in August 2025.

Clerk

15.05.25 Burial ground

Memorial Plaque for the late Roy Marr to be fitted to the memorial bench.

Cllr Cottingham

16.05.25 Highways

None.

17.05.25 Environment**17.1 Playgrounds**

Annual inspections done week commencing 12th May. Report not yet received.

17.1.1 Councillor inspection reports

Circulated. Cllr Govier advised that he no longer wishes to do the monthly playground inspections.

17.2 Furze Hill

Twenty people worked at Furze Hill this week, lots of infected ash (firewood) to remove.

17.2.1 Recreation Ground

Cllr Govier advised that the zip wire screws may require tightening; to await annual inspection report and decision how to proceed.

There is a trip hazard at the border of the leased area on village hall land tarmac put in when the MUGA was installed, this is a small job and may not require three quotes, Clerk to speak with Paul Hendry and discuss a 50/50% charge with village hall.

Clerk

17.3 Other open spaces: Dines Way, Lipscomb Close, Charlotte Close

Nothing to report.

17.4 Transfer of land off Pinewood Crescent: progress report

The transfer is now complete, awaiting £5,200 from Taylor Wimpey. Ruth Cottingham meeting with Taylor Wimpey and contractor on site Monday 19th May to agree the positioning of the fence to be installed around the gas governor.

Cllr Cottingham/Clerk

18.05.25 Other matters

18.1 Village Hall:

Logs placed around the edge of the car park.

18.2 Defibrillator checks

Done.

18.5 Pump Track

No update.

Cllr Govier

18.6 Hermitage Youth Football

No perceived requirement.

18.7 Social media posts

Authorised person to post on behalf of Hermitage Parish Council:- Clerk, Chair or Vice chair.

18.8 To agree change of meeting date from 19th to 26th June.

Agreed, meeting time also amended to 8pm.

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business under Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960."

Part two: -

Three Councillor Co-options – Approved.

The Council welcomes Julie Taylor, Rebecca Mogan and Jon Willey.

19.05.25 Correspondence received since the last meeting not referred to elsewhere.

Correspondence noted on agenda.

20.05.25 Reports from Parish Council representatives who have attended meetings of outside bodies on behalf of the council

Cllr Govier attended The Downs Community Forum on 23rd April and provided a report.

21.05.25 Items to be raised by Councillors (information only)

None.

22.05.25 Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent (information only)

None.

23.05.25 Date of the next meeting

Thursday 26th June 2025 at 8pm in the Adelaide Room, Holy Trinity Church

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.03pm.

Signed _____ Dated _____