

**Minutes of Wokefield Parish Council Quarterly Meeting
16th July 2025 held at Keepers Cottage, Goodboys Lane, Mortimer**

A	Open Forum Nothing was put forward.	
B	<u>Present:</u> Cllr Richard Thorne (RT) Cllr Chris Faulkner (CF) Cllr Jim Thompson (JT) Cllr Nick Carter (NC) Cllr Vicki Poole (VP) - joined meeting 19:55 <u>In attendance:</u> Mrs Sandra Faulkner (Interim Clerk) Ms Di Leighton (Incoming Clerk) <u>Meeting opened at:</u> 19:31	
1	<u>Apologies, Absences and Quorum</u> a) Apologies: From Richard for changing the meeting date. b) Absences: Cllr G Mayes. c) Quorum: The Interim Clerk declared the Meeting to be quorate	
2	<u>Declarations of Interest by Councillors</u> There were no declarations of interest.	
3	<u>Minutes of the quarterly Council Meeting held on 14th May 2025</u> The Minutes of the quarterly Council Meeting held on 14 th May 2025 had been circulated by email. It was agreed they were a correct record of the meeting. Proposed by: Cllr Jim Thompson Seconded by: Cllr Richard Thorne In Agreement: All The minutes were signed by the Chair as a true and correct record of the meeting.	
4	<u>Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 14th May 2025</u> The Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 14 th May 2025 had been circulated by email. Approve the adoption minutes of Annual Parish Assembly 14 th May 2025 Proposed by: Cllr Richard Thorne Seconded by: Cllr Jim Thompson Approved / Carried	

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5	<p><u>Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14th May 2025</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14th May 2025 had been circulated by email.</p> <p>Approve the adoption minutes of Annual General Meeting 14th May 2025</p> <p>Proposed by: Cllr Jim Thompson</p> <p>Seconded by: Cllr Richard Thorne</p> <p>Approved / Carried</p>	
6	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p><u>6a Matters Arising from 6 January 2021</u></p> <p>6 - Goring Lane Speed Limit Concern/Possible Footway</p> <p>CF has given the petition to NC.</p> <p>Action: NC is to put petition to the council meeting, expect to do tomorrow (17th July). Will tell the chairman during the slot at the start of the meeting. If not in tomorrow as too soon, will be the next meeting. Then would be noted. The petition is called Grazeley Green Accident blackspot and seeks to reduce the speed from 50MPH to 40MPH along Goring Lane within Grazeley Green.</p> <p>Action: NC will find out what happens next.</p> <p>NC confirmed that anyone can turn up in that initial 5 minutes to raise a petition. The whole parish has roughly 250 on electoral register, virtually 100% of the residents in the relevant area signed the petition.</p> <p>Add to agenda for the next parish council meeting to follow up the Goring Lane Speed limit petition.</p> <p>JT added the link to the TVP website to report accidents.</p> <p><u>6b Matters Arising from 5 October 2022</u></p> <p>6.2 Financial Matters</p> <p>SF updated that PAYE is now set-up and have made payments. Annual payment last year, this year changed to monthly payments. 22nd each month will make any required payment for any NIC or PAYE payments. Managed to get codes set-up at beginning in July and went through bank on 7th July. Noted that if you are a parish councillor you have to write to them.</p> <p><u>4c Matters Arising from 18 January 2023 & 29th January 2025</u></p> <p>9 – Hedging</p> <p>CF – Have been reporting issues about the hedges and verges in the parish to West Berks but not enough getting done. Last time the verge was cut Oct 23rd 2024.</p>	<p>NC</p> <p>NC</p> <p>DL</p>

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<p>VP – WBC did turning points on Goring Lane (Mans Hill to Goring Lane), then Goring lane to Goodboys Lane, then Palmers Lane.</p> <p>CF - Since the last meeting CF had sent an email to NC asking when the next parish verge cut is due to take place.</p> <p>NC – Provided feedback from WBC that focus is on site lines and that Wokefield is at the end of the cutting cycle, NC will raise a request to look to improve it at the next quarterly meeting. Where it is wide road does not require 2 cuts.</p> <p>CF – The issue is that because the verges have been left for so long now the mower cannot cut it as the verges are now growing trees and the uprights are now hanging into the road. Various places pedestrians are forced to walk in the middle of the walking on the middle of the road to be able to see.</p> <p>NC – In previous years WBC had made cuts to their resources so they had one less tractor therefore would struggle to get 2 cuts.</p> <p>CF – WBC website their SLA says 2 cuts in the rural areas per year. Who is holding them to account on that SLA, or do they need to review their SLA.</p> <p>Action: NC to feed that back to council</p> <p>CF – The verges are large bushes now in many areas but by next year will be trees. This results in immobility for people, a haven for cars only. One may only use footpath if you can get to the footpath. It is causing the whole community to be split up. The potential benefit on people’s health outweighs the cost.</p> <p>RT – What is the possibility of getting a grant to do it ourselves.</p> <p>CF – West Berkshire website states “We are pleased to support any parish council who wish to carry out the verge cutting themselves ... as long as they have the correct qualifications and tools, high vis etc.”</p> <p>RT – Are there any grants available.</p> <p>CF – Would there be any grant money to cover the cost of this?</p> <p>NC – We can probably match what you have got.</p> <p>CF – What if we increased our precept from to fund verge cutting?.</p> <p>NC – Yes you could.</p> <p>NC – The verge is the bit that we/WBC are responsible for, not the responsibility of the landowners. I have also discussed this with Beech Hill – the issue where you have landowners who have not cut the hedge.</p> <p>CF – Proposed a project to contact every resident with a leaflet regarding ‘hedge and your responsibilities’. Residents are required to maintain their own boundary infrastructure.</p> <p>Action: NC will go back to Paul Hendry who is the countryside manager in the environment department and find out further details of own manage verges.</p> <p>9 - Trees</p> <p>JT – Regarding trees in Wokefield and their ownership. Paul Hendry offered to host a zoom call to look at trees in the parish. JT emailed him about the trees in Wokefield but not received a reply. PH had sent out an email to Parish Councils in</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NC</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NC</p>
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<p>January regarding trees in West Berkshire gauging interest interest to do a survey to do remedial work. JT was hoping to get some views from him as to who is responsible for the trees in our common land in the parish. The common land is not reflected on the West Berks map.</p> <p>CF – Not termed common land, it is called Village Green.</p> <p>JT – There is not a category for that in the West Berks map.</p> <p>NC – I will raise this as well.</p> <p>Action: JT to forward the email to NC</p> <p><u>4d Matters Arising from 11 November 2023</u></p> <p>9 - Notice Boards</p> <p>CF updated that the noticeboards have now arrived, and the contractor is letting us know when time to put them up. The contractor will remove the old noticeboards. One closed-in pane for Parish Council notices and an open pane for Community notices so that people can put their own notices up. Old ones were made of wood, new made of coated aluminium and easier to keep clean and tidy and rot-proof.</p> <p>11 - Any Other Business - Pitchkettle Farm</p> <p>JT asked about enforcement action.</p> <p>NC asked Bob Drey the development Manager on 15th May and has asked for an update from the enforcement team.</p> <p>VP – Fenella, who was the enforcement officer, comes out and does inspections.</p> <p>Action: VP to speak to Fenella to add to her list.</p> <p>CF – Permitted development application may be made after 10 years. Time is ticking by. Original application in 2022.</p> <p>Action: NC will reply to Bob to chase again and cc VP.</p> <p><u>4e Matters Arising from 13th August 2024</u></p> <p>9 - Screening Solar Farm off Goring Lane</p> <p>Following a lot of information being circulated regarding another large possible solar farm site in the parish, no planning application has been received. The matter is now closed until such time a planning application appears.</p> <p>Bloomfield Hatch solar farm</p> <p>VP – Tender is out at the moment for the procurement of the solar farm through Spark Energy procurement (Government Framework) The original design is already 10 years old. Technology has moved on. With MOD land, follow defined routes. PC are concerned about the routing of the cable to the Electricity Board connection. It was confirmed that the energy is unlikely to be consumed by AWE. The Planning application suggests 2 alternative routes. The planning permission does not state where it might go. Mearing and James Lane has just been resurfaced. It would be wrong to dig those up again.</p>	<p>NC JT</p> <p>VP NC</p>
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	Action: NC will ask John Winstanley about the route.	NC
7	<p><u>District Councillors' Reports</u></p> <p>Nothing to be added beyond the previous one. Action: NC to resend report to Jim/Chris</p> <p>The black bins will change every 3 weeks. Recycling every fortnight. Food every week. Starts week of 22nd September.</p> <p>NC – Members bid coming out in next week. Closing date 15th September. Money to fund match. Can be used capital things. Asked if verge trimming could be funded or something requiring more resources like Highway replenishment or Verge reinstatement. This is more than general maintenance. VP – Capital things – buying the equipment would be allowed. Action: NC to find out whether members bid can be used for that.</p> <p>As part of Devolution more boundary changes are looming and out for consultation. Various ideas are being muted and discussed to amalgamate more district councils into larger councils. West Berks is part of Phase 3 (part of first batch). By 2027 there would be a council and fully amalgamated by 2032 (pulled forward by 6 years. Would be a mayoral authority. Centre to be confirmed.</p> <p>VP – Highways surfacing - a lot of remedials coming in. VP has driven every road in the ward. There is now AI on bin lorries to measure the temperature of roads to assess when they need gritting. Get measured by surveyor – will be monitored and tracked including degradation on side of road when start cleaning gullies at side of the road.</p> <p>VP - Road sweeping and road clearing has started. Jordans Lane, Amners Lane done. Parts of backroads Beech Hill into Mortimer. Getting done as on the list of the rotas. Twice a year to prevent build-up.</p> <p>VP – Road surface being cleaned and, if dirt solidified, removing the dirt. Laguna Park area has been done. Part of council responsibilities - John Winstanley.</p> <p>VP - Public Procurement Act 2023 – PA2023 – includes Social Value. % of revenue goes into contract goes back in. West Berks are implementing change in policy to enable this. 3% of £142m, will appear back in social value. Community action can be funded through community action pot.</p>	<p>NC</p> <p>NC</p>
8	<p><u>Financial Matters</u></p> <p>8.1 Balance 7th July stood at £10,588.83</p>	

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	<p>8.2 Payments authorised at last meeting</p> <p>Payments made since last meeting:</p> <p>BALC £81.90 SLCC £80.00 CPRE £60.00 S Faulkner wages accrued from 24/25 £520.75 (£160 + £160 + £200.75) PAYE tax on this £130.00 (£40 + £40 + £50) SF Expenses £60.60</p> <p>Interim clerk presented bank statements showing payments going through.</p> <p>8.2 Authorisation for future payments</p> <p>GB for noticeboards £5434.15 Zurich insurance £196.00 Asking that we authorise DL is paid £125 / month DL payment of £62.50 for 14th– 30th June SF hours (from 1st April to prior to 16th July meeting) £303.75 SF expenses £30</p> <p>These were approved for payment. Action: SF/DL to make payments through bank</p> <p>The budgeted annual payment for Parish Clerk is £1500, or £125/month. DL to periodically let parish council know what the hours are.</p> <p>CF gave thanks to the Interim Clerk Sandra Faulkner for all her work over the previous 8 years and welcomed Di Leighton who is taking over as Parish Clerk.</p>	<p>SF/ DL</p> <p>DL</p>
9	<p><u>Planning Matters</u></p> <p>JT – What is happening about container site in James Lane? Had approval for 20 containers, then applied to up to 83 which was approved which said this was the limit. Now over 200 containers and has as exceeded curtilage for original application. VP – Site is under enforcement - planning inspection have gone onsite and said does not meet current requirement. Call-in Reference 24/02051/FUL. Action: JT to change the call-in status on website.</p>	<p>JT</p>

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(Drafted by DL 27 May 2025, finalised 4 August 2025)

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	PC asked how they could find out what business rates were being collected from the parish. They make a freedom of Information request of West Berkshire.	
10	<u>Any Other Business</u> None from Jim, Richard or Chris.	
11	<u>Date of Next Meeting (not mentioned at meeting)</u> 22 nd October 2025 @ 7.30pm	
	<u>Meeting Declared Closed</u> Time: 2122hrs	

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