

RAMSBURY & AXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 17th March 2025 at 7.45pm in Axford Village Hall

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Present:

S Glass – Chair (SG)
D Barnett – Vice Chair (DB)
A Foale (AF)
M Tester (MT)
D Edwards (DE)

C Morgan (CM)
R Greasley (RG)
M Waugh (MW)
E Hodgson (EH)
A Charlwood (AC) – Clerk

Three members of the public were also present

- APOLOGIES** – were received from D Greenway (DGr), H Lloyd (HL), and D Gill (DG). **Approved.**
George Hawes was not present.
- DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST** – None.
- THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**
The minutes of the meeting held on 17th February were approved and signed as a true record.
Proposed EH; Seconded MW. Approved.
- MATTERS ARISING** - None
- NEW CORRESPONDENCE** – Items for discussion*

Ref. No	Date Received	February - March 2025 Correspondence From :	Subject *Highlighted for Discussion
*A8104	13 Feb	Wilts CC Planning Appeals	Red Lion Axford Notification of Enforcement appeal. Fwd. to Planning C. For info.
*A8105	14 Feb	Wilts CC Highways & Transport	Footbridges unlikely to be repaired before June. Fwd. to Cllrs. For info.
*A8107	17 Feb	Peter Wilson	Replacement of fencing along the top of Springs Hill and replacement of styles with kissing gates. For info.
*A8108	19 Feb	Danielle Beeks, J N Bentley	Offer of support for an upcoming community project. SG reported that HL has been in touch and discussed two potential projects that, if they are willing, would benefit the village. This will be discussed again at the next meeting. ACTION - HL
*A8113	24 Feb	Resident	Losing land to the built environment and developers' lack of ecological mitigation and enhancement. Fwd. to Planning Committee. This was in connection with the Upcot Field planning application.

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A8114	25 Feb	Wilts. Planning Dept.	Changes to planning application costs w.e.f. 31 March. Fwd. to Planning Committee . SG gave details of the increases coming into force at the end of the month.
*A8115	26 Feb	CPRE	Invitation to enter 2025 Best Kept Village Competition. SG has the entry form and will submit it. ACTION - SG
*A8116	26 Feb	Elliott McBryde, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	Invasive non-native species. Fwd. to Cllrs. SG has posted this information on the noticeboards.
*A8118	26 Feb	Mary Moore, Wilts CC	Adoption of phone kiosk outside the Memorial Hall. SG has advised the local council that the PC would like to adopt this kiosk to conserve it as part of the street scene, as they have done with the one on Whittonditch Road. WCC will contact us after the consultation period.
*A8119	27 Feb	Rebecca Davies, North Wessex Downs National Landscape	N. Wessex Downs National Landscape Consultation interactive hub/ online survey will stay live till 14 th March. Fwd. to Cllrs. For info.
*A8120	28 Feb	Resident	Speed on traffic through Whittonditch on B4192. This matter will be on the agenda for discussion at the April meeting.
*A8124	05 March	Google Analytics	Website traffic report for February. Fwd. to Cllrs. See Item 11. For info.
*A8125	06 March	Fred Rendell, Milestone Infrastructure	Photos of work done on parish steward's Feb visit. Fwd. to Cllrs. See Item 15. For info.

*The full list of incoming correspondence from 10th Feb – 7th March can be viewed on the parish council website

6. Committee Reports:

6(i) Planning

Diann Barnett

PLANNING REPORT RAMSBURY AND AXFORD PARISH COUNCIL – March 2025

Planning Applications Processed since Feb 2025 Report

New applications -

- PL/2025/02040 36, High St, Ramsbury Remove detached single-storey shed and replace with 2-storey and glazed walkway.
- PL/2025/01658 The Boot, Scholarads Lane Treework
- PL/2025/01559 Upcot Field, Whittonditch Rd 9 houses and associated works
- PL/2025/01846 31 High Street, Ramsbury Treework
- PL/2025/01929 Forge Cottage, Crowood Discharge of planning obligation

Still awaiting -

- PL/2024/07914 Anvil Cottage Barn Demolish and rebuild barn for family house
- PL/2024/08967 7 The Square, Ramsbury Change of use from Class E to residential
- PL/2024/09052 Coachman Cott, Baydon Manor Removal of dangerous asbestos and glass from conservatory
- PL/2024/11389 The Courtyard, Whittonditch Demolition and rebuild of barn
- PL/2024/11184 Ramsbury Manor 'Open-up' work to investigate utilities/structure
- PL/2025/00484 6 Union Street Renew and add dormer windows to loft conversion

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Decisions -

- PL/2024/11667/00253 Ramsbury Manor Walled Garden, greenhouse and associated. **APP**
- PL/2025/00368 Farmers House, Dyers Yd Treework **APPROVED**
- PL/2025/00601 Holy Cross Treework **APPROVED**
- PL/2025/00672 Downside, 4 High St Treework **APPROVED**
- PL/2024/10122 Red Lion, Axford Change of use to residential **REFUSED**
- PL/2025/00095 Walled Garden, Back Lane Treework – fell beech **APPROVED**
- PL/2024/11703 PIP North of Newtown Rd Min 4, max 5 new houses. **REFUSED**

DB reported that two new decisions had been published since her March report :-

PL/2024/08967 Re. 7 The Square, Ramsbury Change of use from Class E to residential – **APPROVED**
PL/2025/00484 Re. 6 Union Street Renew and add dormer windows to loft conversion - **REFUSED**

The various enforcement notices are still ongoing re. work at 42/44 Oxford Street, Lamplands and The Red Lion

DB reported on a Wilts C.C. Planning “Teams” meeting to do with how they process planning applications, held online on 5th March. In summary, the key points she took away from the meeting were :-

- PCs can notify the planners if not all concerned properties have not been notified of an application.
- The 24-day consultation period can be extended if requested (but DB’s very recent experience of doing just that tells us such a request will not necessarily be met if they choose to simply refuse.)
- The PC’s support to the planners for appeals is helpful.
- Early engagement with developers is important, previous consultations can give time for feedback and any surveys carried out.
- Past precedent is no longer a genuine reason for refusal of an application.
- The right to light is no longer a planning condition.
- Construction management plans can mitigate transport concerns.
- Within the new NPPF 11 protection policies such as Natural Landscapes (AONB’s), heritage issues etc are no longer strong reasons for refusal.
- NPPF 143 First homes are no longer mandatory to include within affordable housing provisions.

DB then drew Cllrs’ attention to some aspects of the plans submitted for the application to build nine houses on Upcot Field and asked them to consider whether it was necessary to call a public planning meeting about it:-

- i. Although the sewer shown on the plans crosses the owner of the woodland’s land he has not been consulted about this application. He has brought this to the planners’ attention and made the point that this is a sewer which already tends to block very easily.
- ii. With the exception of house No. 7, none of the houses will have garages but two parking spaces have been allowed for each property. Three visitors’ parking spaces have been included in the plan.
- iii. There is no green planning notice on the gate, but AF commented that that may be because it is no longer a legal requirement.
- iv. The PC has not been inundated with adverse comments about this development so far.

At this point in the meeting the Chair brought forward the Public Forum as the three members of the public were there to talk about the Upcot Field development application. Each in turn raised their concerns, with particular regard to:-

- a) the danger of the site entrance/exit on to Whittonditch Road on a blind bend in both directions being, in their opinion “appalling”, and made worse by the speed of the traffic on that busy road

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- b) the drainage of surface water from the road and how it might affect the water level in the well in one resident's garden
- c) the risk to a tree with a TPO in an adjoining property
- d) the threat to the rookery and the kites in the woodland adjoining the site
- e) their concern about disposal of surface water and sewage generally.

After some discussion it was agreed that the PC will be objecting to the application in any case, because it is outside the village development plan, so a public planning meeting would not alter their position on that. However, SG said that a point should also be made strongly about the potential problems to neighbouring properties arising from the disposal of surface water and sewage. She also recommended the public make sure the local neighbours submit their comments, if they have any, by the deadline of March 24th.

6(ii) Finance

Erica Hodgson

- EH reported on the Finance Committee meeting that was held on 6th March at which a recent communication from the Hall Trustees re electricity costs incurred between January 2024 and February 2025 was discussed. After careful analysis of the Memorial Hall's meter reading records that were available (August 24-Feb 25) it was agreed that electricity charges should be back-dated for the previous year's usage of £558.81. This also takes account of the £125 already paid as part of the PC's rent.

At a subsequent meeting with two of the Memorial Hall trustees on 12th March agreement was reached regarding the back-dated amount due to be paid, and about a composite electricity rate/unit charge to the PC and a system of quarterly billing based on meter readings in future which will be reflected in a new contract between the Parish Council and the Memorial Hall.

At a subsequent meeting with two of the Memorial Hall trustees on 12th March an agreement was reached regarding the back-dated amount due to be paid, and about a composite electricity rate/unit charge to the PC and a system of quarterly billing based on meter readings in future which will be reflected in a new contract with the Memorial Hall.

As the electricity meter serving the Parish Council, serves the PC office, the public WC as well as the Community Space, meter readings were taken over the period of a week to assess usage for each space. From those readings it was agreed that a monthly fee for electricity supply of £20 will be added to the monthly rent for the Charity Shop w.e.f. July 1st 2025, and their historic usage (2024 - July 2025) will be covered by the Parish Council in lieu of a \$137 grant to the Charity Shop in 2024.

- The Financial Standing Orders had been circulated prior to the meeting and were unanimously approved. **Prop. EH; Sec. MT.**
- The Risk Assessment had been circulated prior to the meeting and was unanimously approved. **Prop. DE; Sec. AF.**
- The Asset Register, with some minor updates, has been circulated to the Finance Committee and approved. The approval of the full parish council will be sought at the May meeting. **ACTION - EH**
- It was agreed that since the PC is in the third year of a 3-year agreement with their insurers, we will simply add new items and will consider the overall policy requirements - particularly with respect to excesses - in February 2026 in time for renewal in May 2026.
- SG had previously circulated two quotes for new SIDs to the Finance Committee and is seeking at least one more. So far the prices are coming in cheaper than we paid last time. SG believes the PC should look to replace the ones we have already and will bring back more information for consideration at the next meeting. **ACTION-SG**
- The internal audit of the PC accounts for 2024-25 will take place on 12th May. **ACTION – CLERK**

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6(iii) Rights of Way

Doug Greenway

- DGr was not at the meeting but SG reported that the Rights of Way Committee had met on 13th March.
- Work on the leaflet and posters for the Boundary Walk on Sunday May 4th is in hand and they should be complete by the beginning of next week. It was agreed that a little paragraph needed to be added to the leaflet with information about Ramsbury Brewery, which will be this year's lunch stop. **ACTION-EH**
SG will post all necessary information in Whitton Ways, on the website and in the Village Diary. **ACTION-SG**
- As this year's walk will start from The Square RG was asked to approach the school to seek their permission for the public to be able to use their car park on the day of the walk, and also if they would circulate Boundary Walk information on their parentmail. **ACTION - RG**
- There will be a circular walk on Sunday 6th April. This will be to the Park Farm /Airfield loop at 2pm from the Square. SG will publicise in Whitton Ways, the Village Diary and on the website **ACTION DGr/SG**
- The organisers of the Ramsbury Run have already diverted this year's route in order to avoid the Lofts Bridge river crossing, which is unsafe till WCC can carry out the necessary repairs.

6(iv) Play Areas and Seats

Denise Edwards

- DE reported that two quotes for a new piece of equipment for the Whittonditch play area had come in and two more are in the pipeline. The matter will be discussed more fully at the next meeting. **ACTION – DE/SG**
- Work to remedy the snagging list at Axford play area has been completed but there are still some items still to do at Whittonditch. **ACTION – DE/SG**

6(v) Emergency Committee

Alison Foale

- SG said the contractor still hadn't managed to check the generator at the Memorial Hall. She will try to ensure it is done before the next meeting, and it must then be tested and run before every PC meeting, so it stays in good working order. **ACTION – SG**
- AF is still seeking three new Emergency Wardens. **ACTION – AF/SG**

6(vi) Environment Committee

Maggie Waugh

There has been no meeting recently, but the sub-committee is considering an idea for whether some or all of the community orchard apple trees might be subsidised by making them available as memorial trees. This suggestion is only in its early stages and will require more thought before the next meeting. Other sources of grant money for community projects are also being explored.

7. AXFORD

Diann Barnett

DB reported that the Games Café held on 8th March in the village hall raised £120 towards the cost of a defibrillator for the village.

There has been some fly-tipping up at the pumping station.

8. LOCAL HIGHWAYS & FOOTPATHS IMPROVEMENT GROUP

Sheila Glass

The next meeting of the LHFIG will be held on 22nd May.

9. MARLBOROUGH AREA BOARD

Sheila Glass

SG reported that the meeting scheduled for 18th March has been cancelled due to the election on May 1st.

10. ALLOTMENTS

Denise Edwards

As the designation of the allotment site as a community asset ran out in January 2025, SG was asked to contact Simon Day to request it be renewed.

ACTION – SG

DE will be making a big push to recruit new plot-holders for the vacant spaces and chasing up late payers for this year's rent.

ACTION – DE

11. WEBSITE

SG said that the February traffic report had been circulated.

12. UNION STREET ONE-WAY NORTHBOUND

Sheila Glass

The matter of the cost to the PC of running a six-month trial is being investigated by our county councillor and will be raised again at the next LHFIFG meeting in May, when we hope to progress implementation of this trial.

ACTION – SG/Cllr JS

13. PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

Alison Foale

SG will write again to the resident who raised this matter with the PC, seeking her comments to the proposals contained in the email sent to her on

ACTION – SG

14. VILLAGE MAINTENANCE

Sheila Glass

- The broken bus stop sign Whittonditch Road has still not been mended. SG will chase up again with Wiltshire Passenger Transport, whose job it is. **ACTION - SG**
- The three abandoned cars in the Whittonditch recycling area have been removed at last but, very annoyingly, a new vehicle seems to have appeared there which will have to be investigated. **ACTION – SG**
- White gates on Whittonditch Road – SG is awaiting delivery of the new white gate is storing the other one.
- **See item 6(ii)** regarding replacing the current SIDs with five newer models that are capable of data collection which can be made available to the police. SG is seeking more quotes and will report back to the April meeting. **ACTION - SG**
- SG will submit an entry to the Wiltshire Best Kept Village competition. **ACTION – SG**
- DE confirmed that the D-Day80 group will be holding a VE Day commemoration ceremony around the tree on the evening of 8th May.
- SG has been in touch with the local council about the PC's wish to adopt the old BT phone kiosk outside the Memorial Hall and will pursue the matter. **ACTION – SG**
- AF asked who is responsible for the upkeep of the public area within Atherton Close where a fence has come down and dog owner's dog-poo bags are piling up on the bench. SG will contact Aster, who should be dealing with this. AF has a photograph which she will send to SG. **ACTION – SG/AF**

15. PARISH STEWARD'S ROTA

Clerk

Next visit will be on 3rd April.

ACTION – CLERK

16. MEMORIAL GARDEN

Sheila Glass

SG reported that planting will be going in soon.

17. LIBRARY

No report.

18. MEMORIAL HALL

Sheila Glass/George Hawes

No report.

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19. NATURE RESERVE

Chris Morgan

CM confirmed that WWT had been and replaced a missing bolt on the boardwalk.

20. RECREATION CENTRE

George Hawes

No report.

21. RAMSBURY SCHOOL

Roger Greasley

No report. RG was asked to contact the primary school and preschool to see if the children could produce some Keep Ramsbury Tidy-type posters again this Spring, and/or organise a litterpick to spring clean the village in time for the BKV inspectors' visit.

ACTION – RG

22. VANDALISM/CRIME

MT reported that a patch of snowdrops which had been planted by a resident on the patch of grass at the junction of Crowood Lane with the pedestrian cut to Ashley Piece had been dug up and stolen overnight.

23. PATIENTS' REPRESENTATIVE

George Hawes

No report.

24. MAY ELECTIONS

SG ran through the correct procedure for completion of councillors' nomination forms. As they must be submitted in person to a council office in Chippenham in a Kafkaesque process which is bizarrely onerous and time-consuming, SG has made the necessary series of appointments to take the paperwork for everyone in before the deadline of April 2nd.

ACTION - SG

25. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT IN MARCH

Inv. No	Payments to Suppliers – March 2025	Amount	Net	VAT	Paid By	S137
I4209	Janet Talmage – annual rent for allotments. Paid in Feb	600.00	600.00	0.00	BACS	No
I4210	Ramsbury Brewery – Chair's thank you to Bob Foale for help with installing noticeboard and collecting gate. Paid in Feb.	20.00	20.00	0.00	VisaDebit	No
I4211	HP Instant Ink – printer ink subscription for 28 th Jan – 27 th Feb	11.99	9.99	2.00	VisaDebit	No
I4212	M J Baker Accountancy – payroll fee for February	11.25	11.25	0.00	DD	No
I4213	Idverde Ltd - Bin emptying in February	22.20	18.50	3.70	BACS	No
I4214	Coral Westall – public loo cleaning in March	180.00	180.00	0.00	BACS	No
I4215	Coral Westall – office cleaning Jan-March	34.00	34.00	0.00	BACS	No
I4216	Alice Charlwood – clerk's mileage Jan-March 2025	13.50	13.50	0.00	BACS	No
I4217	Dobbies Garden Centre – Plants for roadside planters	21.60	18.00	3.60	VisaDebit	No
I4218	HP Instant Ink – printer ink subscription for 28th Feb-27th March	11.99	9.99	2.00	VisaDebit	No
I4219	Postage to HMRC – VAT reclaim	1.65	1.65	0.00	VisaDebit	No
	SUB-TOTAL (excluding Clerk's salary I4220)	£928.18	£916.88	£11.30		
I4221	Ramsbury Memorial Hall – Electricity costs 01/01/24-11/02/25	558.81	558.81	0.00	BACS	No
	TOTAL TO PAY	£1,486.99	£1,475.69	£11.30		

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TOTAL AMOUNT ON DEPOSIT*	£95,780.16				
incl. gross interest earned Dec 2022 to 28 th Feb 2025	£4,780.16				
MONIES RECEIVED					
Charity shop rent	£300.00				
Allotment Association annual rent. Received in February	600.00				
March SO for Memorial Hall broadband	9.60				
HMRC VAT reclaim Nov 2024 – Feb 2025	1,886.24				
TOTAL INCOME	£2,795.84				
Current A/c at 28th February 2025 – £7,471.61					

*This includes monies held in reserve for parish initiatives such as the Ramsbury Flyer, defibrillators, provision of play equipment, pavement and road repairs, etc.

SG drew councillors' attention to one additional bill (14221) and a new item of income (HMRC VAT reclaim) which had been added to this schedule since the meeting agenda was sent out.

The Accounts were accepted and were unanimously approved. Prop. SG; Sec. DE

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.20p.m

DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY 14th APRIL at 7.45pm at RAMSBURY MEMORIAL HALL

NB. The April meeting will be held one week earlier than usual, on the second Monday of the month

ALL ARE WELCOME