

BRIGHTWALTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting held on
Monday 9th March 2026 at 7.30pm
at Brightwalton Village Hall

Present: Cllr Annie Agnew, Cllr Mike Cooper, Cllr Christine Delahunty, Cllr Damien Goatley, Cllr Sue Sayers and Cllr Tim Wyatt (Chairman)

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Parish Clerk)
 Councillor Clive Hooker (West Berkshire District Councillor)
 Katherine Moore (Community Coordinator)

Open Session: No questions or comments received and no members of public present.

03/2026/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
 No apologies for absence were received and there were no declarations of interest.

03/2026/02 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2026 as a true and accurate record.

03/2026/03 WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR CLIVE HOOKER
 Cllr Hooker congratulated Cllr Goatley on his actions to try and ensure local housing is allocated in accordance with local connection agreements, resulting a recent local allocation. Cllr Goatley responded that there were still some issues in the process, but a positive connection had now been made with West Berkshire Council. Cllr Hooker highlighted the importance of ensuring that interested parties were on the housing register.

Katherine Moore joined the meeting
Cllr Cooper joined the meeting

A 4.99% increase to council tax had been agreed, with significant pressure on budgets from welfare costs. Cllr Abbs tabled a motion that West Berkshire Council cease all non-statutory services, which was voted down.

A loan of £160m has been requested from central government, repayable over 4 years. An external review of the Council's financial management had raised some concerns with some projects, along with the proposed solar farm at Grazeley, which may be withdrawn, thereby impacting the Council's net zero target.

It was looking hopeful that Leckhampstead Pop-Up Library would be continuing in 2026/27.

Councillors thanked Cllr Hooker for the update.

03/2026/04 COMMUNITY COORDINATOR
a) Katherine Moore (Community Coordinator) updated as follows:

That evening's youth club session had been at the Waterside Centre in Newbury, thanks to a grant from The Saunders Wynn & Coventry Education Foundation, reported at the last meeting. The session had been enjoyed by all those who attended.

It had been decided that from 2027, youth club would not run weekly sessions for the period January to Easter, due to low attendance during the darker nights. However, off site trips and adhoc sessions would still take place. Weekly sessions would resume after the Easter school holiday when evenings are lighter.

Kayaking and Graffiti Art sessions are being explored for future youth club sessions.

- b) Katherine presented a request for funding for the ASPIRE (All Saints Project In Reaching Everyone) project, towards the cost of adding wheels to pews, which will provide additional, versatile space for events and activities.

Agreed to consider further when actual costs are known.

Councillors thanked Katherine for the update.

03/2026/05 ALL SAINTS PCC

There was no report at this time.

03/2026/06 VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

There was no report at this time.

03/2026/07 IT POLICY

Councillors gave further consideration to a draft IT Policy, following initial review at the last meeting.

RESOLVED

to adopt the policy, subject to minor amendments to make it non-mandatory for Councillors to use a Council owned email address, with the final version being approved by the Chairman.

Katherine Moore left the meeting

03/2026/08 PLANNING

The following planning updates were noted:

Application	Address	Proposal	BPC response	WBC decision
25/02105/FUL	Brightwalton Stud	Section 73 application to vary conditions 2, 7 & 19	Nil	Approved
25/02409/HOUSE	Bagatelle Southend	Conversion of single storey bungalow to chalet bungalow with rooms in rood	No Objection	Approved
25/02871/TPC	The Lawns	Lime Tree remove to ground level. Yew Tree crown lift to 3m Conifer Tree reduce by 2m	Not consulted	No objection raised
26/00019/LBC	Elm Cottage	Creation of new bathroom in existing room (currently used as a study)	No Objection	Awaiting decision
26/00223/COND	Brightwalton Stud	Approval of details reserved by Condition 7 Tree Protection & 11 CEMP	Not consulted	Awaiting decision
26/00414/TPC	Hope Cottage	S1 Sycamore with a deep cavity in the base within 5m of building and immediately next to oil tank. Remove to ground level	Not consulted	Awaiting decision
26/00417/TPC	Hope Cottage	Oak trees current height approx. 22m, reduce by 20%, crown raise to 3m	Not consulted	Awaiting decision
26/00418/TPC	The Lawns	Conifer hedge reduction, current height of hedge approx. 9m	Not consulted	Awaiting decision

03/2026/09 SECTION 106 HOUSING

Nothing further to add to the discussion had with Cllr Hooker earlier in the meeting, as detailed in minute reference 03/2026/03.

03/2026/10 HIGHWAYS

There were no road closure notices.

03/2026/11 FINANCE

Financial reports for January and February 2026 were noted and signed by the Chairman.

Bank Balances as at 28th February 2026:

Current account £2,431.38

Savings Account £10,061.66 (includes £2,670.60 CIL Balance)

Community Account £9,591.78

RESOLVED to approve the following payments:

Payee	Amount	Due Date	Description
M Taylor	£250.88	28.02.2026	Clerk's Salary – February 2026
M Taylor	£250.88	23.03.2026*	Clerk's Salary – March 2026

* to ensure payment is cleared through the bank account before the end of the financial year on 31st March 2026

03/2026/12 TREE WORK IN THE OLD CHURCHYARD

Cllr Sayers had met with a tree contractor to assess trees in the Old Churchyard and 2 trees had been identified as dead and required removal.

RESOLVED to approve expenditure of £650.00 to remove 2 dead trees in the Old Churchyard.

03/2026/13 PLAY AREA AND RECREATION GROUND MAINTENANCE

It was noted that the following play area and recreation ground remedial works, approved via email as agreed at the last meeting (Minute reference 01/2026/12), had been carried out:

- i. Reset wooden posts and fencing at entrance to recreation ground at a cost of £236.24
- ii. Replace fence in play area at a cost of £1,182.39 (replacement of whole fence being a more financially viable option than piecemeal repairs)
- iii. Replacement football goal net and hooks on order at a cost of £122.46.

03/2026/14 PLAY AREA MAINTENANCE PLAN

Councillors reviewed a draft maintenance plan for the play area, requested at the last meeting (minute reference 01/2026/13).

RESOLVED to adopt the maintenance plan, as presented, and to enter into Sovereign Play's 'Sovereign Compliance' service in the new financial year at a cost of £399 for 5 years coverage.

03/2026/15 PLAY PARK INSPECTIONS

- i. There were no matters arising from monthly inspections carried out by Cllrs Agnew (January) and Delahunty (February).

It was agreed to pursue creation of an online checklist for completing play area inspections.

Action: Parish Clerk to create an online checklist for play area inspections

- ii. As requested at the last meeting (minute reference 01/2026/13) a cost of £177.00 had been provided to install anti-slip grips on the 'wobbly bridge' on the large climbing unit.

Action: Cllr Goatley to obtain costs to action in-house

03/2026/16

VILLAGE MATTERS

- i. The following tasks to be undertaken as part of the Village Spring Tidy on Sunday 19th April, meeting at 10am:
Old Churchyard – clear fallen branches
Litter picking
- ii. It was agreed to assess whether any maintenance or improvement works were required to the War Memorial.
Action: Councillors to assess potential works required to the war memorial at the Village Spring Tidy, and Parish Clerk to look for grants for maintaining war memorials

03/2026/17

GENERAL COUNCIL MATTERS & UPDATES

- i. Cllr Goatley highlighted concerns following issues with a recent birthday party at the Village Hall.
- ii. To request that the recreation ground grass is 'cut and collected' prior to the Village Fete on Sunday 3rd May 2026.
- iii. **Articles for Brickleton News**
Branch clearance in the Old Churchyard and Litter Picking on Sunday 19th April.
Request a new regular article to highlight young people achievements, recognise local talent and sporting achievements.
Thanks to the person who repaired the noticeboard at The Green.
- iv. **Items for the next agenda**
No specific items at this time.

03/2026/18

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 11th May 2026, 7.30pm at Brightwalton Village Hall, preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.52pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____