

Sibford Gower Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on **Wednesday 3rd September** at **7pm** in Sibford Village Hall, Sibford Gower

Present: Cllr Jackie Noquet (Chairman), Cllr Alan Berks, Cllr Alistair Paul.

In attendance: 8 members of the public, Clerk.

- 1. Election of Chairman** – It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Berks as the Chairman. Cllr Berks completed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was countersigned by the Clerk.
- 2. Public participation session** – A resident welcomed the clerk back to the council. A resident asked if the Clerk knew why Sibford Ferris managed to get their roads fully resurfaced but Sibford Gower did not despite the roads being in a terrible state. The Clerk advised that Sibford Ferris Parish Council (PC) were not aware what triggered the resurface of their roads as they hadn't been pushing for it but the **Clerk will contact Highways to try to find out what the reasoning was and whether Sibford Gower can also have resurfacing completed.** Questions were asked about whether Sibford Gower will be getting any funds from the S106 agreement on the new development in Sibford Ferris. The Clerk advised that she believes the only funds currently allocated to Sibford Gower is £10k towards the Village Hall and Sibford Ferris PC are currently working on trying to get the funds that were allocated to projects that are not required transferred to items that would be beneficial to Sibford Ferris and/or Sibford Gower but at the moment Cherwell District Council (CDC) have advised that the S106 agreement is written in a way that Sibford Gower cannot receive any of the other funds. District and County Cllr Chris Brant has agreed to work with Sibford Ferris PC to try to get the funds reallocated. It was suggested that the Clerk could point out to CDC that in the Local Plan Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower are grouped together as a single Category A village therefore surely funds allocated to Sibford Ferris would be able to be used in Sibford Gower as part of that Category A village. The **Clerk agreed to raise this with CDC.** A resident asked if there should be a bus stop on the opposite side of the road to where the bus shelter is in Sibford Ferris as the children tend to wait on the other side of the road. The **Clerk will make enquiries with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) about this.**

Business

- 3. Apologies for absence** – None.
- 4. To note the resignation of Geoffrey Noquet and confirm the timescales for Notice of Vacancy** – The resignation was noted. The Notice of Vacancy has been published and CDC will inform the PC soon after the closing date of 12th September if the PC can co-opt a new member.
- 5. Co-option of new councillor** – There have not been any applications for the vacancy that has been open since December 2024. **Clerk to put a new advert out.**
- 6. To elect a Vice-Chairman** – It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Noquet as the Vice-Chairman.
- 7. Members' declarations of interest for items on the agenda** – Cllr Noquet declared an interest on item 20 (25/02149/PIP) so will not be able to vote on that item meaning the PC will be inquorate and cannot discuss or vote on the item.
- 8. To appoint an Internal Controls Councillor** – It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Noquet as the Internal Controls Councillor.
- 9. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council (PC) meetings held on 15th April and 25th July 2025** – The minutes were proposed, agreed, and duly signed.

10. Outstanding matters/actions from previous meetings

- a) Update re parking issues on the corner of Bonds End Lane and Main Street – The sign has been provided to the resident to be displayed at appropriate times. A discussion was held about insurance liability should the sign be damaged or damage other property. And whether there is permission for the sign to be placed in suitable locations. **Clerk to contact County and District Cllr Chris Brant to see if he can offer any advice, and contact Kat Gash at Highways if Cllr Brant cannot help.**

11. Proposal to adopt the following new policies – It was proposed and agreed to adopt both policies listed below.

- a) General and Sexual Harassment Policy
- b) Biodiversity Policy

12. Proposal to adopt the following updated policies - It was proposed and agreed to adopt all policies listed below.

- a) Standing Orders
- b) Financial Regulations
- c) Code of Conduct
- d) Publication Scheme
- e) Risk Assessment

Assets and services

13. Burial Ground

- a) Update re responsibility for maintenance of the Churchyard including tree management, memorial stones, and repair of the damaged walls – A member of the Church Committee has advised that they have tidied the wall up a bit and the tress have been dealt with but the PC still needs clarity on who is responsible for which parts of the Churchyard as ongoing maintenance work may be required on the trees and there are still residents who are not happy with the state of the wall. **Clerk to contact the Reverend to arrange a meeting to discuss all of the issues and try to get clarity on areas of responsibility.**

14. To consider the possibility of changing e-mails and the website to .gov.uk due to the new governance requirements – The Clerk explained that at the moment the PC's e-mail system is compliant with the new regulations however it is believed that within the next two years PCs may be required to have a .gov.uk e-mail address and website. The current e-mail and website provider has asked the PC to consider arranging for a different company to manage the e-mail system so it makes sense to change to .gov.uk at the same time to avoid needing to make further changes in a couple of years. There is also the option to set up a .gov.uk website at the same time although this is not as much of a priority. As the councillors all lose their places on the PC in May 2026 it was agreed that May 2026 would be a good time for any changes to take place as new councillors will need to set up new e-mail addresses anyway. **Clerk to bring prices of e-mail addresses and websites to the March 2026 meeting to allow the PC to make a decision to be implemented ready for new councillors in May.**

Finance

15. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025

- a) To receive the internal auditor's report for 24/25 and agree any actions required – The Internal Auditor's Report was received and a summary of the issues raised are listed below with the PC responses noted in red.
Accounting records were appropriately kept up to December 2024 after which there was a change in personnel which resulted in a change to the standard of record keeping. The PC notes this issue and is confident that going forward the records will be kept fully up to date.

Salaries should be paid monthly. The salaries were not being paid monthly as the Clerk in post at the time was having trouble getting access to the payroll system. The recently appointed clerk has access to the payroll system and monthly payments are now being made.

It does not appear that periodic bank reconciliations took place for the last 6 months of the year. This was an oversight and will be put back in place by the recently appointed Clerk. The website does not show all documents and information as required by legislation. Again this was an oversight that the recently appointed Clerk will rectify before the end of September.

- b) To appoint an internal auditor for the 25/26 financial year – It was proposed and agreed to appoint Sue Rowley as the Internal Auditor for 25/26.
- c) To complete and approve the annual governance statement – It was proposed and agreed to tick ‘yes’ to all statements except statement 2, which is ticked ‘no’ due to the lack of quarterly internal controls checks in for Sep to Mar, and statement 9, which is ‘N/A’ as the PC is not a trustee., and for the Chairman and Clerk to sign the document.
- d) To approve the accounting statements - It was proposed and agreed that the Accounting Statements were approved and that the Chairman should sign the document.
- e) To approve completion of the Certificate of Exemption for 24/25 – The PC confirmed eligibility to claim exemption and approved the signing of the document by the RFO and Chairman.
- f) To agree dates for the notice of public rights 24/25 – proposed dates are 5th September to 16th October 2025 – Proposed and agreed.

16. To confirm completion of a quarterly asset check and agree any actions required – Cllr Paul confirmed he has completed an inspection and there were no issues raised. Cllr Noquet will complete the next inspection. **Clerk to send inspection form to Cllr Noquet.**

17. Bank balances as at 29.08.25 - £1,564.94 and £17,771.69 – Cllr Noquet confirmed the balances stated are correct.

18. Proposal to remove Vanessa Oliveri as a signatory from the bank mandate – Proposed and agreed. **Clerk to arrange mandate change.**

19. To note and approve the following payments and receipts since the last meeting:

Payments: Proposed and agreed.

22.04.25	Lloyds	Account fee	£4.25
19.05.25	Lloyds	Account fee	£4.25
06.06.25	ICO	Data Protection Fee	£47.00
17.06.25	Lloyds	Account fee	£4.25
30.06.25	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Mowing of churchyard 28.05.25	£154.80
30.06.25	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Mowing of churchyard 30.04.25	£154.80
30.06.25	N R Prickett	Grass cutting 10.05.25	£387.60
21.07.25	Zurich	Annual parish insurance	£300.00
21.07.25	Lloyds	Account fee	£4.25
11.08.25	N R Prickett	Grass cutting 10.05.25	£387.60
11.08.25	Vanessa Oliveri	Salary April 24 to leave date	£898.56
19.08.25	Lloyds	Account fee	£4.25

Receipts: Noted.

09.04.25	Lloyds	Interest	£14.00
09.05.25	Lloyds	Interest	£12.14
09.06.25	Lloyds	Interest	£11.81

09.07.25	Lloyds	Interest	£10.21
11.08.25	Lloyds	Interest	£11.24

Invoices to be paid and not yet cleared at the time of publication of the agenda: Proposed and agreed.

Sibford Scene	Annual donation	£200.00
Sibford Village Hall	Annual donation	£500.00
Sue Rowley	Internal Audit 24-25	£75.00
Sibford Village Hall	Hall hire 29.05 and 03.09.25	£24.00
Kirsty Buttle	Salary August - 12 hours, and office	£204.93
HMRC	Tax August	£48.60
NEST	Pension August	£14.12

Planning

20. Planning applications received

25/02065/F – 1 Acre Ditch, Sibford Gower. Two storey and single storey extensions to rear. **No objection**

25/02149/PIP - The Pheasant Pluckers Inn, Street Through Burdrop, Burdrop. Permission in principle - 3-4 new dwellings. **Due to the PC being inquorate as Cllr Noquet has an interest in this item the PC cannot respond to this application other than to inform the planning team why the PC is not giving an official response. Clerk to inform planning team.**

25/02152/F – 2 Acre Ditch, Sibford Gower. Two storey and single storey rear extensions. **No objection.**

21. Planning decisions received

25/01375/F – Brock Cottage, Acre Ditch, Sibford Gower. Single storey extensions to rear, raising of roof to provide first floor accommodation and new porch. **Approved.**

22. Planning appeals received

APP/C3105/Y/25/3371110 – Little Brook, The Colony, Colony Road, Sibford Gower. RETROSPECTIVE - Revision of roof slope from consented drawings application 21/00437/F and 21/00438/LB. **No representation.**

23. Planning appeals decisions received

Appeal Ref: APP/C3105/W/25/3360446 - The Pheasant Pluckers Inn, Street Through Burdrop – Provision of 3-7 dwellings. **Appeal dismissed.**

Community

24. To consider Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) Proposals re 'Marking of existing bus stops and other works' – It was agreed that the PC is in agreement with the proposals in principle but councillors would like to visit the locations to check that they can't see any issues before the response is submitted. **Clerk to respond to OCC on 8th September if no issues have been raised by then.**

25. Information exchange – Cllr Alistair Paul announced his resignation from the PC. The councillors and Clerk expressed their thanks to Cllr Paul for his work on the PC. The Clerk noted that Cllr Paul's resignation means the PC is now inquorate and does not have the ability to hold any meetings or co-opt new members. In such instances the District Council will now intervene and will provide a Cllr to join the PC until further members can be found to be co-opted from the community. **Clerk to include information about the fact the PC is now inquorate in the adverts for new councillors to make residents aware of the urgent need for more people to put themselves forward to join the PC.** It was noted that all councillors will lose their place on the PC in May as there are elections in May so this could be a good opportunity for residents who are possibly interested to only need to commit to 6-8 months as a councillor before making a decision as to whether they would like to put themselves forward for the next 4 year term of office.

26. To agree a date for the Parish Council meeting to be held in December – It was agreed that the next ordinary meeting will take place on 15th December but it may be necessary to call an extraordinary meeting sooner if any candidates for co-option to the PC come forward.

Meeting closed @8:22pm.

Date of next meeting – 15th December 2025

Signed..... Date.....