

Sibford Gower Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on **Monday 15th December** at **7pm** in Sibford Village Hall, Sibford Gower

Present: Cllr Alan Berks (Chairman), Cllr Jackie Noquet, Cllr Roger Mallows, Cllr Zoe Wesson.

In attendance: 5 members of the public, Clerk.

27. Public participation session – A member of the public who has submitted the application for the public footpath to be diverted (item 44) provided information about the application and the reasons behind his request. The applicant advised that he believes that the new route will be better for walkers as it is a slightly more direct route, it would mean the styles would be removed and gates would instead be put in the relevant places. It was suggested that maybe a sign could be put on the gate advising pedestrians that when they pass through the gate they are entering a 60mph road to help ensure safety of pedestrians. The applicant will be responsible for carrying out the work to change the styles and put in gates, along with cutting away some hedge, but there is no cost to the Local Authority or the Parish Council for the change to take place.

Business

28. Apologies for absence – None.

29. Co-option of new councillor – One vacancy remains on the council but no further applications have been received. **Clerk to readvertise the vacancy along with the upcoming elections.**

30. Members' declarations of interest for items on the agenda – None.

31. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council (PC) meeting held on 18th November 2025 – The minutes were proposed, agreed, and duly signed.

32. Outstanding matters/actions from previous meetings

- a) Update re parking issues on the corner of Bonds End Lane and Main Street – Highways have advised that they are happy for the sign to be placed on the verge subject to it being suitably secured and removed as soon as it is no longer required.
- b) Update re S106 allocation re the Hook Norton Road development – Sibford Ferris Parish Council have agreed to ask Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) if the remaining funds from the bus shelter allocation to be reallocated to Sibford Gower Primary School. **Clerk to provide further update at the next meeting.**
- c) Response from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) re whether there should be a bus stop on the opposite side of the road to the new bus shelter in Sibford Ferris – OCC confirmed that there is an unmarked bus stop in that location. It cannot be marked for safety reasons.
- d) Response from OCC regarding when Sibford Gower is likely to get any of the roads resurfaced - The full response stating that the roads should receive some improvements in the 2026/27 financial year has been published on the parish website.

33. Proposal to adopt the following new policies

- a) IT Policy – Proposed and agreed.

34. To consider returning to having 6 meetings per year (Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov) rather than the current 4 meetings per year – Proposed and agreed.

Assets and services

35. Burial Ground

- a) Update re responsibility for maintenance of the Churchyard including tree management, memorial stones, and repair of the damaged walls - Clerk has now had a response from the Reverend and they are arranging a meeting to discuss.
- b) To receive quotes for the grass cutting contract on the Churchyard and Burial Ground and to agree which contractor to appoint – Only one response was received from Thomas Fox Landscaping despite the request for quote being sent out to 5 contractors. It was proposed and agreed to accept the quote received of £3,597.32 per year + VAT. **Clerk to inform Thomas Fox.**

Finance

- 36. To confirm completion of the first (Apr to Jun) and second (Jul to Sep) quarterly Internal Controls check** - Cllr Noquet confirmed the checks have taken place and all was found to be in order.
- 37. To confirm completion of the quarterly asset check and agree any actions required** – Cllr Noquet confirmed the check has taken place and no immediate issues were found but it was noted that the ‘Biddy Bennett’ bench should be monitored over the next few months to consider if repair or removal may be required. **Clerk to send out new rota for asset inspections.**
- 38. Bank balances as at 09.12.25 - £253.50 and £21,222.64** – It was noted that £253.50 is correct but that an additional amount of £10.12 had gone into the Instant Access bank account on 9th Dec after the figures were put on the agenda, therefore the correct balance is £21,232.76.
- 39. Proposal to change bank account provider to Unity Bank in order to benefit from higher interest rates – details of fees and interest for both accounts are:** It was proposed and agreed to change to Unity Bank, and that all councillors should be added to the bank mandate to try to provide the best possibility of financial continuity after the elections in May. **Clerk to open new account.**

Lloyds Bank - £4.25 per month fee, 0.6% gross interest

Unity Trust Bank - £6 per month fee, 2.1% gross interest

- 40. To consider and possibly agree (dependent on the holding of a meeting in Jan subject to item 34) the budget and resulting precept for 2026-27** – As a meeting will be held in January it was agreed that the final approval of the budget will be completed in the January meeting. The Clerk provided information on various items, including the need to budget for both a standard election in May (£2,043.45) and build a ringfenced reserve towards the cost of a by-election (£2,416.59). The PC has not increased the precept for a number of years but unfortunately it is now not possible to hold the precept at that value due to increasing costs and it is likely that an increase of between 10-13% will be required this year although in real terms the impact on households will be minimal. **Clerk to make relevant updates to the budget and bring back to January meeting for consideration and approval.**
- 41. To note and approve the following payments and receipts since the last meeting:**

Payments: Proposed and agreed.

03.09.25	NEST	Pension August	£14.12
29.09.25	Moore	Fee for reminder letter 1	£48.00
29.09.25	Moore	Fee for reminder letter 2	£48.00
19.09.25	Lloyds	Account fee	£4.25
29.09.25	Kirsty Buttle	Salary and office Sep	£333.35
29.09.25	HMRC	Tax Sep	£81.20
01.10.25	NEST	Pension Sep	£23.54
23.10.25	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Churchyard mowing 11, 25 June	£309.60
23.10.25	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Churchyard mowing 23 July	£154.80
23.10.25	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Churchyard mowing 1, 15 Sep	£309.60
23.10.25	CDC	Dog bin emptying 6 months	£377.52
20.10.25	Lloyds	Account fee	£4.25
30.10.25	Kirsty Buttle	Salary and office Oct	£333.35

30.10.25	HMRC	Tax Oct	£81.20
31.10.25	NEST	Pension Oct	£23.54
18.11.25	Lloyds	Account fee	£4.25
03.12.25	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Churchyard mowing 1, and 15 Oct	£309.60
03.12.25	Sibford Village Hall	Hall hire 18th Nov	£12.00
03.12.25	Kirsty Buttle	Salary and office Nov	£333.55
03.12.25	HMRC	Tax Nov	£81.00
03.12.25	NEST	Pension Nov	£23.54

Receipts: Noted.

09.09.25	Lloyds	Interest	£9.84
10.09.25	CDC	Precept	£4,725.00
14.10.25	HMRC	VAT refund	£935.35
09.10.25	Lloyds	Interest	£10.95
13.11.25	Sole & Son	Burial fee	£434.00
10.11.25	Lloyds	Interest	£11.16

42. To approve payment of the following invoices: Proposed and agreed.

Thomas Fox Landscaping	Churchyard mowing 11 Nov	£154.80
Kirsty Buttle	Salary and office December	£333.25
HMRC	Tax December	£81.20
NEST	Pension December	£23.54

Planning

43. Planning applications received

25/03011/TCA – Bramley Close, Bonds End Lane, Sibford Gower. T1 Birch - reduce height by 5 metres.
No representation made.

25/03093/F – Nicholas Corner, Burdrop. Variation of Condition 2 (plans) and removal of Condition no. 3 (stable block) of 19/01002/F, to allow for the retention of existing stable block. **No comment.**

Planning decisions received

25/02065/F – 1 Acre Ditch, Sibford Gower. Two storey and single storey extensions to rear. **Approved.**

25/02152/F – 2 Acre Ditch, Sibford Gower. Two storey and single storey rear extensions. **Approved.**

25/02233/TCA – The Millennium Field, Temple Mill Road, Sibford Gower. G1 - Pine mix area - Crown raise pines to 4 metres to improve canopy shape. Fell small poor specimen understory trees within group. G4 - Ash x3 - Fell and process-due to ash die back. **Approved.**

Community

44. To consider the consultation regarding diversion of Sibford Gower Footpath No 12 at Top Barn Farmhouse – It was proposed and agreed that the Clerk should submit a response of support to the proposals on the basis that the change does not appear to have any negative impacts and actually improves safety for those using the path.

45. To consider the effectiveness of notifying parishioners about meetings and consider improvements that could be made – Currently residents can find out about upcoming meetings via the website daily e-mail (if signed up), on the PC pages of the website, and on the noticeboard. There does not appear to be a highly subscribed active village WhatsApp group for the PC to post information on so it was agreed that if possible some additional information being published in the

Sibford Scene could be helpful. **Cllr Wesson agreed to write occasional updates for the Sibford Scene and ask the editor to include the 2026 meeting dates in the 'dates for the diary'.**

- 46. To agree dates for Parish Council meetings in 2026** – It was proposed and agreed to plan meeting for 20th Jan, 10th Mar (APM followed by ordinary meeting), 18th May, 4th Aug, 29th Sep, and 10th Nov. **Clerk to make village hall bookings and publish dates on the noticeboard.**
- 47. Information exchange** – None.

Meeting closed @ 9:33pm

Date of next meeting – 20th January 2026

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