

Sibford Gower Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on **Tuesday 29th September 2026** at **7pm** in The Quaker Meeting Room, Sibford Gower

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

In attendance: 3 members of the public, Clerk.

- 47. Public participation session** – A resident raised questions about whether the Town Estate Charity (TEC) have the power to reject a Parish Council (PC) nominee as this has happened previously and the resident feels that if they do have the power to reject a nominee then the applicants should be made aware that it is a possibility.

Business

- 48. Apologies for absence** – None. It was noted that the District and County Cllrs have not attended a meeting for some time. The Clerk does e-mail the agenda to them but it was agreed that the **Clerk should specifically invite them to the next meeting.**

- 49. Members' declarations of interest for items on the agenda** – Cllr Mallows declared an interest in item 51c as he is a trustee of the TEC.

- 50. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council (PC) meeting held on 4th August 2026** - The minutes were proposed, agreed, and duly signed.

51. Outstanding matters/actions from previous meetings

- a) Update re concerns raised about overgrown foliage on 'Piggy Lane' – The resident isn't able to cut the vegetation back so the Clerk e-mailed Sanctuary Housing on 11th August to ask them to cut it back, but no response has been received. **Clerk to chase up Sanctuary Housing.**
- b) Update re request for a 'Please close the gate' sign to go on the gate at 'Piggy Lane' – After some discussions between Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and Cherwell District Council (CDC) it has been established that the gate is owned by OCC and they have advised that the Public Rights of Way Team will go to the site as soon as they can so it is unclear if they will add a sign or put a closer on the gate (or both). **Cllrs to monitor the situation and advise the Clerk if no action has been taken by the end of the year.**
- c) Update re advert for new Town Estate Charity (TEC) nominee – The advert has gone out with a closing date of 23rd October 2026. It was agreed that should interviews be necessary (depending on the number of applicants) they will be held in the 2 weeks following the deadline, in order to allow the nomination to be agreed at the November PC meeting. **Clerk to send out doodle poll to all councillors except Cllr Mallows (due to his interest in TEC) to check their availability for 27th, and 28th October, and 3rd, and 4th Nov, to get a date in the diary.**
- d) Response from Severn Trent regarding request for information about their plans to upgrade the sewage works in Sibford Gower – The Clerk contacted Severn Trent and they advised they have no records of any works taking place in the Sibford Gower area and suggested that it is likely the work is being completed by Thames Water, even though they confirmed that they are responsible for wastewater and sewerage services, and Thames Water are responsible the clean water supply in the area. Cllr Berks has spoken to the resident who provided the info and he has advised that since the last meeting Severn Trent have come back to him saying that they are no longer interested in using the land and won't be digging boreholes after all. Local residents will keep an eye on the area to see if anything happens on the land and will inform the PC if it does.

Assets and services

52. Burial Ground

- a) Progress on Memorial Inspection Procedures – The article regarding the upcoming inspections has been published in the Sibford Scene. Safety testing will start in a few weeks when the ground has time to return to its pre-drought state. During a pre-funeral risk assessment of the new burial ground, four memorial stones were found to be unsafe. The Clerk tried to contact the relevant memorial masons to see if they could be fixed under warranty without needing to contact the family. Banbury Memorials immediately sent someone out to fix the two memorials installed by them with no charge. Humphris were not willing to communicate with the Clerk about the matter and requested that the grave owner contacts them directly. The Clerk has written to both grave owners and one of the grave owners has responded advising that they believe the Parish Council is at fault for the memorial being unstable due to the fact that the PC recently allocated the adjacent plot for a cremated ashes interment, and therefore the PC are liable for the repair costs. The PC requested an independent report from a memorial mason, the outcome of which was that the adjacent interment has not had any impact on the memorial stone and the reason both of the memorials are unstable is because the mason that originally fitted them did not install a ground anchor system. The Chairman of the PC has called Humphris to make them aware of this and they again stated that they will not speak to the PC about the memorials and that the individual grave owners should contact them, and they would then visit the site, inspect the memorial and either provide details of costs to the grave owner or advise if the cost will be covered by them. This is made a little more complicated by the fact that Humphris was bought by another company (Funeralcare) since the memorials were installed therefore although the Humphris name is still being used, it is a different company. The PC would like to support the grave owner in trying to get Humphris to repair the memorial at no cost to them as the grave owner is not at fault, therefore it was suggested that the PC could provide a template letter for the grave owner to send to Humphris, providing the information the PC has been given about the memorial. **Clerk to contact the grave owners and provide a template letter to send to Humphris.** It was agreed that the PC will continue to provide ashes interment plots between the existing burial plots as advice has been received from two professionals advising that this will not cause any issues with adjacent memorials. It was proposed and agreed to order six memorial safety issue signs at a cost of up to £80. **Cllr Berks to order the signs.** The Reverend has agreed to send a plan of the Churchyard memorials to the PC but despite chasing a number of times the plan has still not been received. **Clerk to contact the Diocese to see if they can provide a plan, and if not Clerk to seek prices of professional mapping services.**
- b) Grass cutting and wildflower area maintenance in the Churchyard and Burial Ground - Cllr Berks spoke to Thomas Fox Landscaping about the wildflower meadow and they said the relevant person was on holiday and that they would get back to Cllr Berks, but despite him chasing this they have still not come back to him. **Cllr Berks to continue to chase.**

Finance

- 53. Bank balances as at 24.09.26 - £123.00 and £24,251.85** – Cllr Noquet confirmed the balances stated are correct.

- 54. To note and approve the following payments and receipts:**

Payments made since the last meeting: Proposed and agreed.

31.07.26	Unity Bank	Account fee	£7.00
25.08.26	NR Prickett	Grass cutting 8th July	£588.00
25.08.26	Quaker Meeting Room	Room hire	£25.00

25.08.26	Sibford Village Hall	Hall hire 4th Aug	£18.00
25.08.26	Kirsty Buttle	Salary and office Aug	£333.35
25.08.26	HMRC	Tax Aug	£81.20
28.08.26	NEST	Pension Aug	£23.54
31.08.26	Unity Bank	Account fee	£7.00

Receipts: Noted.

09.09.26	CDC	Precept 50%	£5,031.00
----------	-----	-------------	-----------

Invoices to be paid: Proposed and agreed.

Kirsty Buttle	Salary, office, and backpay to Sep	£397.11
HMRC	Tax and NI Sep	£107.58
NEST	Pension Sep	£28.20

Planning

55. Planning applications received

26/01865/F – Longview, Pound Lane, Sibford Gower. Extension to existing annexe. This application seeks to develop the consent for temporary accommodation previously permitted through 15/00098/F, and would appear to require defined formal recognition to consolidate the permanent nature of the accommodation proposed. Whilst noting that the proposal utilised the existing footprint, there is some concern that the increased height may be considered inappropriate to the location and setting in the landscape. Should consent be approved, an appropriate condition is required to ensure that the annexe remains ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling and cannot be sold, sub-let or leased as a separate unit of accommodation. (Response made using delegated powers). **APPROVED.**

26/01959/TCA – Temple Close, Temple Mill Road, Sibford Gower. T1 Ash – fell. **No objection.** (Response made using delegated powers). **APPROVED.**

26/02196/TCA – Holly Cottage, Street through Burdrop, Burdrop. G1 Leylandii - x 4: Fell to ground level. G2 Poplar - x3 Fell to ground level. T1 Pine - Fell to ground level. Comment only – A reference within the Planning Officers Report for the recently approved 26/01795/PIP states - "The enlarged red line area in the current application over that previously approved encompasses an area which currently consists of trees. The said trees would need to be protected, and the necessary arboricultural details would be expected at the Technical Details stage" (para. 8.30). This would appear to be directly relevant to this TCA application and merits due consideration. (Response made using delegated powers).

26/02135/F – Oaklands, Acre Ditch, Sibford Gower. Change of use of land from agriculture to residential garden land (Class C3 Use) and erection of garden shed (retrospective), provision of soft landscaping and associated work. **No comment.**

26/02241/TCA – Elmbridge Farm House, Main Street, Sibford Gower. T1 Ash - Crown reduce by 4 metres in height and 2 metres on laterals to relieve end weight major basal and stem decay. T2 Ash - Multi stemmed with main central stem fractured to base – fell T3 Oak - Crown raise 5.5 metres all round. **No comment.**

26/02363/TCA – The Red House, Street through Burdrop, Burdrop. T5 Ash - Sectional felling due to Ash dieback disease present. T6 Goat Willow - Fell to ground level. T7 Walnut - Crown reduce by 3 metres laterally and apically. **No comment.**

56. Planning decisions received

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. **Approved.**

26/01087/F – Longview, Pound Lane, Sibford Gower. Erection of stable block and riding arena with access track. **Approved.**

26/01533/F – Vine Cottage, Bonds End Lane, Sibford Gower. Garden room extension. **Approved.**

26/01795/PIP – The Pheasant Pluckers Inn, Street through Burdrop. 3-4 Dwellings. **Approved.**

Community

57. Recycling of blister packs – Some residents have asked the Chairman about if there is anywhere that takes blister packs for recycling as the Drs surgery no longer takes them. Boots Chemist takes them but residents can purchase a 'Zero Waste Bag' to send off various types of recyclable materials for recycling. As there is a cost to the Zero Waste Bag service which may not be an option for some residents, it was agreed for the **Clerk to collate information about recycling collection points, listing the nearest collection points to The Sibfords, and some recycling from home options such as the Zero Waste Bag, and publish it on the PC website.**

58. Information exchange – Main Street will be closed for resurfacing overnight for a week from 26th October. It was suggested that the Village Hall Committee could be approached to see if they would allow local residents to use the car park overnight. It was also noted that the Village Hall has a few events on during that week and the groups using the hall for those events may not be aware that they won't be able to access the Village Hall car park in a vehicle during that time. **Cllrs to speak to their contacts at the relevant groups to make them aware of the access issues.**

Meeting closed @ 8:17pm

Date of next meeting – 10th November 2026

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