

Sibford Gower Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on **Monday 18th May 2026 at 7:15pm** in
Sibford Village Hall, Sibford Gower

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

In attendance: 4 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** – Speeding down the colony is still an issue despite the 20mph limit. Discussions were held regarding different potential speed reduction options and previous requests for a speed van which was declined in 2023 and the previous attempt at setting up a speedwatch group in the area. **Clerk to contact the police to see if their views on putting a speed van in the area on occasion has changed, and if they have any alternative suggestions about reducing speeding on Colony Road.**
The webmaster of the village website advised that he is delighted to see the progress on the Parish Council (PC) website and the new .gov.uk e-mail addresses have been set up so he can now take a step back from managing these. He advised that he hasn't yet deleted the PC section of the website as he believes that there is still a lot of information on there that hasn't been transferred to the new website that the PC may wish to use. **Clerk to have a look at the website and make relevant changes before confirming that the old website pages can be closed down.**

Business

3. **Apologies for absence** – None.
4. **To elect a Vice-Chairman** – It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Mallows as Vice-Chairman.
5. **Members' declarations of interest for items on the agenda** – None.
6. **To approve the minutes of the Parish Council (PC) meeting held on 10th March 2026** - The minutes were proposed, agreed, and duly signed.
7. **To appoint an Internal Controls Councillor** – It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Noquet as the Internal Controls Councillor.
8. **To approve any changes required to the bank mandate due to new council membership** – No changes required.
9. **To agree either a new date or a new venue for the September meeting due to the Village Hall not being available for the previously planned date** – It was agreed to continue with the current planned date and try to book the Quaker House. **Clerk to arrange venue.**
10. **Outstanding matters/actions from previous meetings**
 - a) Update re new Parish Council website – The new website is now live. All new email addresses are now in use. The **Clerk needs to complete a comparison of the information provided on both websites to check everything required has been transferred and will then inform the village website webmaster to remove the PC content** and replace with a link to the new website. **Clerk to put a notice re the new website on the village website.**
 - b) Response from Highways regarding timescales for road repairs in Sibford Gower – The Clerk has been chasing this but still has not had a response, however information provided in a report provided by County Cllr Brant suggests that Main Street will receive surface inlay works between July and September 2026.

- c) Response from Highways regarding ownership of the well housing near the pond - *'We hold no records of the structure, but it appears to be a well that would have been placed there for the benefit of the residents of the Parish. As such, it ought to be the responsibility of the Parish Council.* It was agreed that the PC is happy to accept ownership and responsibility for the well provided Highways can provide detail of the exact land area of responsibility and what impact the licence to plant on the land has on the PC accessing the well to maintain it.
Clerk to e-mail Highways asking for details of the Licence to Plant, area of responsibility, and confirmation that Highways are happy for the PC to put the well on the PC's Asset Register.

11. Proposal to re-adopt the following policies with no changes made - Proposed and agreed

- a) Biodiversity Policy
- b) Code of Conduct
- c) Complaints Procedure
- d) Data Breach Policy
- e) Data Protection Policy
- f) Disciplinary Policy
- g) Financial Regulations
- h) Freedom of Information Policy
- i) Grievance Policy
- j) IT Policy
- k) Privacy Notice
- l) Records Retention Policy
- m) Risk Assessment
- n) Role Holder Privacy Notice
- o) Scheme of Delegation
- p) Sexual and General Harassment Policy
- q) Standing Orders
- r) Subject Access Request Procedure

12. Proposal to adopt the following amended policies - Proposed and agreed

- a) Internal Financial Controls
- b) Publication Scheme

Assets and services

13. Burial Ground

- a) Proposal to form a Working Group to put together recommendations for ongoing management of the closed Churchyard, and PC owned Burial Ground – It was agreed that the Working Group should include the full council plus at least one Sibford Ferris Parish Councillor if possible. The Working Group will also invite the Reverend and any interested members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) to attend the meetings to allow their views to be taken into account. The first meeting of the Working Group will take place on 23rd June at 2pm in the Churchyard.
- b) Feedback from the Clerk regarding Memorial Safety & Inspections Training attended on 15th May – The Clerk provided information regarding the training provided and advised that the first step required is for the PC to agree a policy in relation to inspection regularity, and what action will be taken should any memorials be found to be unsafe.

14. Proposal to renew insurance with Zurich Municipal at a cost of £300 – proposed and agreed. Clerk to arrange payment.

1 member of the public left the meeting at 8:45pm.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2026

15. AGAR 2026

- a) To receive the internal auditor's report for 25/26 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.
*As regards question O on the internal audit, I have ticked no despite there being a Privacy Notice, Publication Scheme, Data Protection Policy, corporate e-mail address, and an IT Policy, as to date there is no accessibility statement on the website. But I understand Sibford Gower Parish Council have instructed a new website which is launching soon which will have an accessibility statement, so I expect this to be remedied soon. **The new website includes an Accessibility Statement***
- b) To appoint an internal auditor for the 26/27 financial year - It was proposed and agreed to appoint Sue Rowley as the Internal Auditor for 26/27.
- c) To complete and approve the Annual Governance Statement for 25/26 - It was proposed and agreed to tick 'yes' to all statements except statement 10, which is ticked 'no' due to the lack of an accessibility statement on the website, 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 for 25/26 - 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 25/26 - 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 25/26 – proposed dates are 3rd June to 14th July 2026 - Proposed and agreed.

Finance

16. **Bank balances as at 12.05.26 - £237.90 and £23,369.12** – Cllr Berks confirmed the balances stated are correct.
17. **To confirm completion of the final (Jan to Mar) quarterly Internal Controls Councillor check for 25/26** – Defer to next meeting.
18. **To confirm completion of a quarterly asset check and agree any actions required** – Cllr Mallows completed a check in February and found a number of minor issues which have been dealt with.
19. **To note and approve the following payments and receipts since the last meeting:**

Payments: Proposed and agreed.

30.03.26	Kirsty Buttle	Salary, office, and stamp	£335.05
30.03.26	HMRC	Tax Mar	£81.20
30.03.26	OALC	Memorial Inspection Training	£198.00
31.03.26	Unity Bank	Account fee	£5.00
30.03.26	Lloyds Bank	Account fee	£4.25
30.04.26	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Churchyard mowing March	£168.73
30.04.26	N R Prickett	Miriam Tebbs hedges cut	£126.00
30.04.26	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Churchyard mowing April	£341.06
30.04.26	Parish Online	PC website	£300.00
30.04.26	Kirsty Buttle	Salary, office, SIM and One Drive share Apr	£350.99
30.04.26	HMRC	Tax Apr	£81.00
30.04.26	Farnborough Parish Council	Reimbursement Mar and Apr Clerks pension	£47.08
30.04.26	Unity Bank	Account fee	£7.00

Receipts: Noted.

27.03.26	Sibford Ferris Parish Council	Burial Ground share minus website share	£561.98
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24.03.26	Credit	Interest from closed Lloyds Bank account	£2.07
31.03.26	Unity Bank	Interest	£29.12
08.04.26	Lloyds	Reversal of bank charge	£4.25
14.04.26	CDC	Precept 50%	£5,031.00
14.04.26	HMRC	VAT refund	£724.09

Invoices to be paid: Proposed and agreed.

CDC	Half yearly dog bin emptying	£377.52
N R Prickett	Grass cutting 9th May	£588.00

Planning

20. Planning applications received

26/00659/LB – Burdrop Farmhouse, Burdrop. Replacement of existing steel casement windows within the historic farmhouse with new steel framed windows installed within the existing timber sub-frames; replacement of two external doors on the south elevation together with new timber door frames and glazed overlights within the existing doorway openings - no alterations proposed to existing window or door openings and no changes to the surrounding masonry. **Support - We support the works detailed which seek to address specific issues identified through earlier planning applications in a more appropriate manner, while retaining the character and integrity of the Grade 2 Listed Building within its Conservation Area location. (Response made using delegated powers).**

26/00743/TCA – Lavender Cottage, Bonds End Lane, Sibford Gower. T1 Apple - crown reduce by 2 metres all round reducing water shoots back to previous points. **No comment. (Response made using delegated powers). APPROVED.**

26/00721/F – Stickleys House, Main Street, Sibford Gower. Replacement of existing shed with a single-storey detached shed incorporating a roof-mounted photovoltaic installation. **Support - Noting the Planning Officer's observations identified through the Pre App referencing both the revised shed and the Listed Building location within the Conservation Area, we support the applicant's wish to generate appropriate renewable energy for domestic use. (Response made using delegated powers).**

26/00759/F – Longview, Pound Lane, Sibford Gower. Extension to existing annexe, and replacement of existing nissen hut with new home studio. **Comment only - The Parish Council wonder if a change of use is required as they aren't aware of any previous permission to allow the annex to be used as habitable space? Other than that the Parish Council has no comment on the application. (Response made using delegated powers).**

21. Planning decisions received

25/02824/F – 2 Shepherds Close, Burdrop - AMENDMENTS. The erection of one new two storey self-build dwelling alongside No 2 Shepherds Close, with all associated works. **Approved.**

26/00332/F – 1 Acre Ditch, Sibford Gower. Variation of Conditions 2 (plans), 3 (material sample), 4 (wall and roof materials) and 5 (rooflights) of 25/02065/F - The conditions are proposed to be varied to allow two minor amendments to the approved development. Firstly, to allow the first floor extension to be finished in an off-white/buff render on three sides, together with the north-facing wall of the existing single storey rear element (being re-clad), in place of natural ironstone. All other external materials remain as approved. Secondly, to allow installation of a standard flush rooflight in place of the currently required conservation type rooflight. **Approved.**

Community

22. Information exchange – A resident has contacted a councillor regarding the Well opposite the pond and raised their concerns that it is a village asset that should be able to be accessed by residents but they believe the planting that has taken place around it has given the impression of private land and

makes it inaccessible. The PC will be able to look into this further when confirmation about the PC rights re the well are received from Highways (see item 10c).

- 23. Proposal to exclude the public and the press in order to discuss a confidential item (item 24) – Proposed and agreed.**

The Clerk and 3 members of the public left the meeting at 9:06pm.

- 24. To agree changes to the Clerk's contract in relation to pay scale caps – After discussion it was agreed that the payscale for the role of Clerk should be between SCP 21 and SCP 28. Clerk to make amendment to the Clerk's contract showing SCP28 as the cap in the payscale.**

Meeting closed @ 9:25pm

Date of next meeting – 4th August 2026

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