BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Minutes

The meeting of the Berrick Salome Parish Council was held in the Berrick and Roke Village Hall on 13th March 2025.

Present:
Andy Batt [AB] (Chair)
Jim Whitworth [JW] (Vice-chair)
Craig Tribe [CT] (Responsible Financial Officer)
Jane Ellingworth [JE] (Councillor)
Rob Workman [RW] (Councillor) *Co-opted during this meeting*
Julian Fox [JF] (Parish Clerk)
In Attendance:
David Turner [DT] (District Councillor)

1) **Apologies for absence**
None

2) **Declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda**
None

3) **To approve and sign the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 9th January 2025**
Approved and signed by the Chair

4) **County and District Councillors' Reports**
Please see latest reports via links below.
OCC February Report
SODC March Report 2025

DT also advised the following at the meeting:
- District Council's Council Tax element was third lowest nationally.
- Brown Bin first payments will be based on a pro rata basis to bring all existing customers in line with a standard April-March year.
- No progress on Chalgrove Airfield to report.
- Asked if he felt the Joint Local Plan 2041 (in development) would stand if a unitary authority came into being rather than the existing County and District structure DT advised that he couldn't really predict and reassured that in the meantime the JLP would continue to be progressed and hoped that if a unitary authority was created then they would adopt the work done.

5) **Planning Decisions and Applications**

a) **To consider the following planning applications:**
P25/S0177/FUL
Old Post Office, Berrick Salome
Demolition of workshop / studio building and its replacement with a new 3-bedroom house.
The applicant and the Parish Council were granted an extension by SODC on compassionate grounds.
This application will now be considered at our May meeting.

P25/S0342/HH & P25/S0343/LB
Well Cottage, Roke
Construction of a ground floor rear extension with rear door canopy.

JW presented a positive view to these applications and advised that immediate neighbours had supported on the SODC portal.
There had been an objection placed by the Heritage Officer but amended plans to alleviate the concerns aired had been presented.
Although the Heritage Officer had not submitted a response to the amended plans the Parish Council resolved to support the applications.
Action – JF to submit PC's support on the SODC portal
Both applications were subsequently granted by SODC on 19th March 2025.

b) To note the following applications awaiting decision by SODC:

P24/S1153/FUL
Chequers Inn, Berrick Salome
Re-organisation of parking area. New pergola and paving to front of north-east elevation.
Latest Info – No further news as a result of the pub's temporary closure

P24/S3131/FUL
Land Adjacent to the Orchard, Braze Lane, Benson
Erection of 40 no. age-restricted dwellings (Use Class C3) including 40% affordable housing and communal facilities, together with a new access off Braze Lane and pedestrian footway, including parking, landscaping and all enabling and ancillary works.
Latest Info – SODC target decision deferred to 15/04/25
Subsequently amended plans were received by SODC on 19th March 2025

c) To note the decisions of SODC on the following:
P24/S3454/FUL
Rosslyn, Green Lane, Berrick Prior OX10 6JW
Demolition and removal of existing 2 bedroom bungalow and construction of new self-build 3 bedroom 1.5 storey height house.
Granted 04/03/25

6) To consider a request for PC involvement in community purchase of The Chequers with regard to;

a) Communication within village
The Parish Council resolved that communication regarding the group of villagers attempting to consider a community style purchase was best served through the WhatsApp Group and potentially flyers, rather than the PC's email database.

b) Applying a covenant
A member of the group attended and advised the following info:

1. 17 residents currently involved.
2. Brakspear have given permission to publicise the opportunity.
3. Proposing a lease based free trade model rather than traditional tenancies offered by tied breweries, with an option to buy freehold.
4. A request was made for Parish Council to apply a covenant to the title to restrict the use of the property as a hostelry ad infinitum. This is usually done by a separate land holder.

CT advised that the PC lands were not registered and this may cause a problem in registering a covenant.
AB questioned whether Brakspear would attach the covenant. Response was no, as it would be an establishment in competition in the same industry.
JW was unsure of the viability of the covenant long term.
The Council resolved that it would be open to further consideration if a detailed plan was presented.

The Council also suggested that the group be given the opportunity to present to residents at the Annual Village Meeting scheduled for 24th April.
Action JF to include in Annual Village Metting agenda

7) Finance

a) Financial Officer's Report
See Appendix 1

b) To approve schedule of payments and transfers
Approved

c) To potentially approve continued membership of OALC. £180.00 + vat
Approved

d) To potentially decide on moving the Parish Council's banking facility
CT presented details and proposed moving the facility
Resolved to move in line with CT's proposal

e) To agree extra expenditure for recreation ground furniture due to price increase since grant application
Though prices seem to vary a little depending on offers available online an extra expenditure of approx. £150.00 was approved.
Action CT to complete items c) – e)

8) Standing Orders

a) To review the Parish Council's policy for public participation in its meetings.
CT proposed that the guidance from OALC to have a Public Participation section included in our future agendas is adopted which would fall in line with our existing Standing Orders.
After discussion on the pros and cons this was approved.
Action JF amend future agendas and email explaining to residents prior to next meeting.

b) Amend Standing Orders as necessary.
As a result of resolution at a) amendment is not required.

c) Review and agree revised Standing Orders as a whole.
Reviewed and agreed.

9) To review and potentially approve updated Risk Assessment

Additions related to the Baffled Ditch were made.
Updated document approved and signed.

10) To review and potentially approve updated Fixed Asset Register

Additions related to the Baffled Ditch were made.
Updated document reviewed and approved.

11) **To review Model Publication Scheme and decide if any amendments are required**

CT proposed that no amendments were necessary at this time.
Council agreed.

12) To review landscaping of Village Hall Grounds/Recreation Ground and potentially approve associated payments

Prior to the meeting JE had circulated some proposals to Councillors regarding some works to control/resolve some issues:

a) To clear the brambles from the existing area of cleared brambles towards car park and including the trees whereby the brambles are now entwined in them. This would also include clearing these back away from the main grass area and to ensure easier ongoing maintenance.
Expenditure of £290 approved.

b) To clear the additional brambles to the left of the trees above.

Decision deferred

c) To crown lift the oak trees between the car park and the goal.
Agreed to get quotes from tree surgeons
Action JE to obtain quotes.
There was also discussion regarding enhancing some areas with wildflower seeds/plugs. JE advised that she was liaising with BaNG and would advise further asap.

13) To receive a BSPDG update, confirm approval for forthcoming expenditure for emergency equipment and a storage shed, and for the storage shed to be suitably located close to the vehicular entrance to the Allotments site

For detail please refer to JW's report at Appendix 2
Resolutions made from that report:

- Siting of shed at allotments approved
- £1200 + vat fund for shed installation approved
- £2100 + vat fund for flood equipment to be taken from BSPDG budget approved

RW raised the point that items being purchased and sited in the shed should be insured
Action CT to check existing insurance cover

At this juncture a vote was taken on Item 3x of Standing Orders to extend the meeting by 15minutes to allow time to cover the remaining items.

14) To receive an allotments update

JW presented a report, the details of which can be seen in Appendix 3

15) Clerk's Report

a) Confirmation that a District Councillor Grant of £1235 had been received for Recreation Ground seating.

b) Benson Bulletin – JF advised that he had been contacted by the publishers to advise that as a result of an increasing population in Benson they intended withdrawing circulation of the Benson Bulletin in our Parish on a free basis due to rising costs. Anyone wishing to receive would be asked to pay a subscription. JF proposed that as the Bulletin was online and included a very good audio version he felt the best alternative for Parishioners would be to include a link via our mailing list emails, enabling people to continue to receive the information on a free basis online rather than a hard copy. The publishers are happy with this arrangement and therefore it was considered a good option
Action JF to communicate within Parish

c) JF had received some communication from a parishioner regarding the footpath from Church Lane to Hollantide Lane regularly becoming overgrown, particularly with nettles.
It was noted that the far end was in Ewelme Parish
Action RW and JF to survey the existing state and see if they could influence OCC to get the path into good order

16) To consider any other matters the Chair deems urgent - for information only.

None

17) Date of next meeting.

Thursday 8th May 2025 at 8.00pm

Signed: Rob Workman **(Chair)** **Date: 8th May 2025**

Appendix 1 – Responsible Financial Officer's Report

To Parish Council meeting Thursday 13th March 2025

1. **Financial Report**
   Bank balances on 28th February 2025 totalled £26,670. There were three uncleared items totalling £1,105. The total reserves of the Parish were therefore £25,565.

2. On 28th February 2025 the accounts showed a deficit of £3,559. This is partly due to VAT yet to be recovered on large capital expenditure for the baffles and shed removal. Also the annual invoice for garden services was received since the last meeting.

3. **Schedule of payments**

   There has been no cheque payments since the last meeting.

Date	Chq. no.	Payee	Amount (£)	Purpose

Confirmation of the Council requested for the following online payments:

Ref.	Payment Date	Payee	Amount (£)	Purpose
242530	10/01/2025	Azalea Landscapes	3,095.00	Garden services
242531	26/01/2025	Shield Maintenance Ltd	63.43	Dog waste bin emptying
242532	22/01/2025	Collins & Lane Builders Ltd	1,200.00	Demolition and removal of disused shed in allotments
242533	03/02/2025	Collins & Lane Builders Ltd	10,440.00	Supply and instal of ditch baffles including drainage channels
242534	02/03/2025	Shield Maintenance Ltd	63.43	Dog waste bin emptying
242536	17/03/2025	Local Authority Tech CIC	318.00	Parish Online website service and additional domain
242537	27/02/2025	Azalea Landscapes	490.00	Additional hawthorn hedging supply and plant.
242538	27/02/2025	Azalea Landscapes	170.00	Fitting of three trellises attached to Village Hall
242539	30/03/2025	Shield Maintenance Ltd	63.43	Dog waste bin emptying

There has been one debit card payment since the last meeting:

Ref.	Date	Payee	Amount (£)	Purpose
242535	03/02/2025	Microsoft	79.99	Microsoft Family 365 subscription

There have been no direct debit payments since the last meeting

Ref.	Date	Originator	Amount (£)	Purpose

There has been the following bank transfers since the last meeting.

Date	Transfer from	Transfer to	Amount £
10/01/2025	Business Premium account	Community account	3,505.91
23/01/2025	Business Premium account	Community account	1,263.43
03/02/2025	Business Premium account	Community account	973.67
27/02/2025	Community account	Business Premium account	193.57

4. **OALC membership renewal**

   Our OALC membership is due for renewal on 1st April 2025. The cost is £180 + VAT. I recommend we renew as this is a very useful service.

5. **Bank facilities**

   I recommend that we move our bank accounts to Unity Trust from Barclays Bank. Sometimes the service we have received from Barclays has not been very good. Whilst there is no fee to operate the current account the deposit account pays a low interest rate of 1.35%, reducing to 1.25% on 13th May. Unity Trust charge a monthly fee of £6 but offer an interest rate of 2.25%. The extra interest earned will cover the cost of the bank fees. If we are to change it would make sense to add Jane and Rob as signatories at that time. Barclays have still not confirmed that David Bridgland has been deleted.

6. **Recreation ground furniture**

   We have received the grant money of £1,235 from SODC to purchase the new furniture for the recreation ground. The price of the furniture has increased slightly since the grant application was submitted. The difference can be recovered from the reserves and I recommend we go ahead with the purchase.

   Octagonal Picnic Table with Backrests: was £895; now £985; increase £90
   Captain's Treble Seat: was £340; now £370; increase £30

Appendix 2 – BSPDG Update

Update

- Freddie Van Mierlo's team is pushing Thames Water to resolve our long-standing issues with Thames Water
    - Raw sewage outflow at manholes on the Roke road, near the Roke/Rokemarsh junction.
    - Failure of sewer network to cope with delivering sewage from homes in the parish to the sewer network in Benson
    - Tanker use and detrimental impact of tanker traffic 24/7
    - Freddie has written strongly worded letter to Chris Weston, CEO
- Neil Godfrey is BSPDG member responsible for TW issues and liaison with FvM's team.
- Ian Tomlinson is BSPDG member responsible for arranging Harrow Corner / Lane residents' campaign to get TW to fix lane surface damage
    - Damage has now exposed Gigaclear cables. Residents are following up with TW and Gigaclear
- Recent activities by contractors at the site between Kingswood and Stonehaven appear to have resulted in muddy surface / ground water entering the sewer. This has been reported to Thames Water who have attended site. JW awaiting further follow up update from TW. Note, PP for the development included conditions on Foul and Surface Water schemes that needed to be fulfilled before commencement of construction. Applications for discharge of fulfilled conditions do not appear to have been made (no refs on planning site). Should we ask SODC?
- Baffled Ditch has not yet been put to the test – we may need to adjust when we can see performance during exceptionally heavy rainfall or shortly after. Would prefer not to see exceptionally heavy rainfall!
- One parishioner sought assistance in response to our communication about riparian responsibilities. JW visited Harlequin to review and advise. The owner subsequently made arrangements for San Clayton to look at doing some work on the timber supports for the banks of the stream. Pete Snellgrove has attended and undertaken some clearing of stream and sump between Harlequin and the road. BSPDG will add this location to a forthcoming schedule/programme of regular clearing activities to be done once or twice each year.
- BSPDG members agreed that trying to clear the apparently blocked culvert(s) at Roke/Rokemarsh junction is probably not safe. We also do not have the benefit of suitably heavy duty equipment for this. It has been reported to OCC Highways with a request for them to clear and we await their response.
- We have been asked if we wish to submit a proposal to OCC Flood Mitigation for any project(s) we would like to undertake with grant funding in the forthcoming Financial Year. We have until 18th April to submit. Current thinking across the group appears to be to focus on one potential project this year – possible flood water retention and mitigation along Hollandtide stream and surrounding area above / East of Berrick Prior where the majority of water entering the village from the North East comes in. Nick Everard, Pete Snellgrove and Martin Cook are jointly preparing the initial proposal. If we pursue this, one BSPDG steering group member will take overall responsibility for the end to end project.
- In general, BSPDG is working towards having each steering group member take overall responsibility for on or more specific elements of our work. In addition to those mentioned above, Jeremy Arthur is responsible for BSPDG communications to the Parish and beyond (with the exception of external comms to and about Thames Water)

- Maintenance equipment for ditches being ordered to the value of approx. £530 using remaining approved OCC Grant. This will leave a balance in our favour caused by overpayment by OCC. We have agreed to discuss what to do with that once approved items have been bought.

Requests for Approval

1. To agree that a storage shed may be sited at the Allotments (as near as possible to the vehicular entrance whilst keeping clear of areas used for access, parking and temporary dumping of woodchip and manure for allotments use)
2. To approve the purchase of one storage shed with associated guttering, water-butts, lighting, base and locks (including installation by volunteers) to a total maximum cost of £1200 net of VAT. (see attached detail). To be funded within the specific 24/25 approved reserve for BPDG
3. To approve the purchase in the forthcoming financial year, commencing April 2025, of Flood emergency equipment to the value of £2100 maximum net of VAT (see attached detail page 2), funded from the 25/26 approved specific reserve for BSPDG

Appendix 3 – Allotments Update

- All existing Allotment plots are now occupied under standard, unmodified Tenancy Agreements until 31st January 2026 (automatically renewable)
- We have an enthusiastic group of Allotmenteers and can expect to see improved levels of cultivation and general improvements this year (a few new polytunnels, some new fencing, at least one new greenhouse, and one plot being revived from being overgrown)
- The new village wildlife pond has been dug in and lined behind plots 6a, 7 & 8. Further steps towards completion are expected over the next couple of weeks or so
- Roger Derbyshire continues as our "Allotmenteers' Representative", liaising between other allotment tenants and JW on behalf of the PC. Roger will be arranging a meeting of allotment tenants, hopefully prior to the Village Meeting and we hope he will continue beyond that in his role, subject to tenants' agreement. Roger will present an update to the Village meeting
- A proposal for purchasing and siting a shed to store Emergency Flood Protection equipment near the vehicular entrance to the Allotments is being / has been considered at this evening's meeting

Jim Whitworth