



BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

THE PARISH OF BERRICK SALOME ANNUAL PARISH MEETING APRIL 2026

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on the 23rd April 2026 in Berrick and Roke Village Hall. This document provides materials from the various representatives who gave presentations.

CONTENTS

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
- 2 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APM ON 24/05/25
- 3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2025/6 – Rob Workman Chair
- 4 OBSERVATIONS OF THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS
- 4a COUNTY COUNCILLOR – Judith Edwards
- 4b COUNTY COUNCILLOR – David Turner
- 5 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT – Craig Tribe
- 6 BERRICK SALOME PARISH DRAINAGE GROUP – Rupert Coghlan
- 7 BERRICK SALOME QUARRY CHARITY – Abbie Clayton
- 8 BERRICK SALOME RELIEF IN NEED CHARITY – Graham Cooper
- 9 VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – John Bird
- 10 ALLOTMENTS REPORT – Greg Broomfield
- 11 BENSON NATURE GROUP – Tracey Coomber
- 12 ST HELEN'S CHURCH ACTIVITIES – Roger Derbyshire/Marian Shaw
- 13 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES (IF ANY) TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS
- 14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1) Apologies for absence

Graham Cooper (Berrick Relief In Need Chairity), Rupert Coghlan (BSPDG), Tracey Comber (Benson Area Nature Group) and Judith Edwards (County Councillor) were unable to attend, so submitted their reports in writing.

2) To approve and sign the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2025

Rob Workman summarised for the attendees and the minutes were approved.

3) Chairman's Report 2025/26 – Rob Workman

Happy St George's Day everyone! Good evening, it's great to see so many of you here tonight... either keen to hear about parish matters, or just here to check I really am stepping down. This is a special parish, and last weekend's Progressive Supper proved it. A brilliant evening, a lot of fun, and possibly a little less "progressive" by the final course... A huge thank you to Nicol, Marian and Claire for organising it, and to everyone who hosted, cooked, or bravely opened their homes. This village simply





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

wouldn't be what it is without the many volunteers and people willing to let neighbours judge their cooking!

Now, you'll be pleased to hear this is both my first *and* last Chairman's report, so I'll try to make it a good one... and more importantly, not too long. Yes, I'll be stepping down as Chair following this evening. I joined the Parish Council 15 months ago and took on the role of Chair this time last year. It's been busy, interesting and at times surprisingly dramatic. Not quite *The Traitors*, but not far off at times... Unfortunately, real life has caught up with me. Work has moved back onto site, time has become tighter, and with a wedding on the horizon this year, I've decided it's time to step aside and let someone else take the reins. Mainly before I accidentally schedule a parish meeting on my own wedding day. While I'm stepping down from this role, I'll still be around... just probably doing more practical things to help out and hopefully fewer emails.

Parish Clerk

We said goodbye to Julian Fox, who stepped down last July. His surprise leaving party showed just how much he was appreciated and also how good we are at keeping secrets when we really have to. Since September, Angie Barker has joined us as Parish Clerk and as our only paid officer, she has the unenviable job of keeping the rest of us organised. Angie has been brilliant, efficient, patient, and very good at reminding us what we should have done last week. The Parish Council are very lucky to have her. Thank you, Angie.

Councillors

We've also had a few changes in the team. Jane Ellingworth stepped down in May, and Ian Kirkwood joined us in July - thank you both.

Andy Batt will also be stepping down after three years on the council. Many thanks to Andy for all his work and steering the parish council as Chair previously to me.

Planning

Now, onto everyone's favourite topic, planning. I can feel the excitement already. It's actually been a slightly quieter year in terms of planning applications, with 10 applications considered to date. We supported 5 and objected to 5 so we're nothing if not consistent. There's one more after this meeting if you want to hang around.

Of those, SODC have been approved 5, refused 1 and 4 are still pending including 3 applications at Roke Marsh Farm and one at the Old Post Office in Berrick.

The big one this year has been the Beechcroft proposal for 40 age-related dwellings adjacent to The Orchard - technically in Benson, but close enough to keep us awake at night. When it was refused and went to appeal, we decided to get involved alongside Benson Parish Council as a Rule 6 party - which, for anyone who doesn't know, basically means *a lot* of reading, meetings and coffee!





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

It took a huge amount of effort from a lot of people but I'm very pleased to say the appeal was dismissed (or refused). A proper team effort by SODC, both Parish Councils, residents and professional advisors all pulling together and I'd especially like to thank Craig Tribe, who gave up a huge amount of his time voluntarily. I suspect he now knows more about that site than anyone ever should. *That definitely deserves a round of applause.*

Homes England – Chalgrove Airfield

Looking ahead, Chalgrove Airfield continues to hover in the background, with plans for around 3,000 homes. We're still waiting for a formal application, but I believe our position remains very clear - we strongly object.

The scale of what's proposed is effectively a new town, with all the traffic and infrastructure challenges that come with it most of which, inevitably, seem to land on everyone else. For now, we watch and wait for applications, albeit slightly nervously.

Planning Policy & Neighbourhood Plan

Another challenge at present is SODC's lack of a five-year housing land supply which in planning terms basically means "developers are feeling lucky." We're already seeing signs of that, another new proposal in Benson for 170 homes south of Watlington Road (opposite side of B4007 to Beechcroft) currently an environmental screening opinion has been submitted - the precursor to a full or outline planning application due in May.

The Beechcroft appeal also highlighted that our Neighbourhood Plan is now out of date mainly because it didn't allocate sites.

So as a parish we've got a choice to make:

Do we keep reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan every 5 years, or do we bite the bullet and allocate a small number of sites to give it longer-term strength? Neither option is entirely painless but it's a conversation the parish council will need to have via a public consultation. And when that happens the parish council will likely be looking for volunteers, so consider that your gentle warning!

Other Matters

Away from planning, there's a lot that keeps the parish council busy – managing the allotments (or allotment holders), managing the recreation ground and the play park, and ongoing discussions with the Drainage Group/Thames Water about drainage issues and OCC Highways about potholes.

Joking aside, the Parish Drainage Group has done a huge amount of work and continue to make progress on the phase 1 works. I'd like to thank the Drainage Group on behalf of everyone. It's not the most glamorous topic, but it's definitely one of the most important... especially when it rains. We'll be hearing updates from the drainage group and other parish groups shortly.





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

A Final Thought

Before I finish, I'll say something that may make my fellow councillors slightly uncomfortable. Parish Councils are often described as boring. Now... I'm not saying that's *entirely* accurate but the Parish Council could definitely benefit from some new faces, fresh perspectives and a bit more diversity.

The Parish Council needs more women, more younger residents, and more people willing to get involved. Because at the moment, we're in danger of knowing far too much about poo bins and drainage, and not enough about anything else.

So if you've ever thought about joining, please do. It's more interesting than you might expect, and it genuinely makes a difference.

In Summary

Despite the challenges, particularly around planning, I believe the Parish Council is in good shape. And I want to finish with a genuine thank you to all my fellow councillors for their time, effort, and commitment. It's often unseen work but it matters a great deal. Thank you all for listening and for your support over the past year.

4a) Observations of County Councillor Judith Edwards

Introduction

This has been my first year as County Councillor for the Chalgrove & Thame West Division. It has been a challenging but rewarding year, focused on understanding County Council processes, representing parish priorities, and ensuring rural and market-town communities are properly reflected in county-wide decision-making.

As you will be aware, I was diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer in December 2025 and have had to step back from council duties to focus on treatment. This report therefore reflects work undertaken prior to that point. I am pleased to say I am nearing the end of my treatment and hope to return to work in early May. I am very grateful for the support and kindness shown by parish councils across the division.

Representation and Council Work

I attended **Full Council**, scrutiny committees, locality meetings and extensive member training during the year. I serve on the **Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee** and the **People Overview & Scrutiny Committee**, focusing on NHS services, public health, adult social care and safeguarding.

In September, I made my **maiden speech at Full Council**, speaking in support of Family Centres and highlighting the work of the **Chalgrove & Watlington First Steps Family Hub**. I also volunteered as





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

Chair of the Henley & Thame Locality Committee, reflecting my interest in neighbourhood governance and strengthening links with parishes.

Working with Parishes and Communities

I attended parish and town council meetings across the division, including Berrick and Roke, Brightwell Baldwin, Chalgrove, the Haseleys, Great Milton, Little Milton, Newington, Stadhampton, Tetsworth, Tiddington and Thame Town Council. Where attendance was not possible, I encouraged direct contact and follow-up.

I also represented the County Council at a range of community and civic events, the flag raising ceremony for Armed Forces Week, including **Thame Pride**, village family events and the **Chalgrove Horticultural Show (60th anniversary)**, which highlighted the vital role of volunteers and community groups.

Highways, Flooding and Infrastructure

Highways and flooding were among the most significant issues raised by parish councils.

I worked closely with parishes and officers on repeated flooding issues in **Tiddington, Little Milton, Great Haseley** and **Newington**, pushing for both immediate mitigation and longer-term solutions. The move to **annual gully clearance**, supported by additional county funding, has already made a difference in some areas, although legacy issues remain. I also followed up on potholes, drainage failures, road safety concerns and structural issues such as the weight-restricted bridges over the River Thame near Tiddington.

Planning and Strategic Issues

The proposed development at **Chalgrove Airfield** has been a major issue. Homes England's exhibition indicated a forthcoming planning application, and from a county perspective, **traffic and highway capacity** remain key concerns. I met with county officers, district councillors, our MP and **Martin-Baker Ltd.**, who have stated the proposals are incompatible with their operations. This remains an ongoing concern, and I remain concerned about the whether we are being listened to. The recent case where a refusal of planning permission for further housing development on the edge of Chalgrove was overturned at appeal is a concerning precedent.

In response to the planning permission for **Great Haseley Industrial Estate**, where there was a proposal to use the site for a depot for waste disposal trucks, I focused on highways impacts linked to HGV traffic through surrounding villages. I was pleased that planning permission ultimately included conditions to reduce local traffic impacts.

Local Government Reorganisation, Health and Other County Matters

Local government reorganisation has been a major theme, with three unitary options submitted to government. I raised concerns about the "**Greater Oxford**" proposal and favour an option that keeps





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

Oxfordshire coherent, is simpler and least disruptive to services. We expect to hear from the Secretary of State about the decision for Oxfordshire in June 2026. Elections for a shadow authority are likely to take place in May 2027.

Through my scrutiny roles, I focused on NHS provision, adult social care, safeguarding and preventative approaches such as the “**Age Well**” programme. It was encouraging later in the year to see **Ofsted and the CQC report effective progress on SEND services** in Oxfordshire.

Other county-wide issues included the introduction of the **Oxford Temporary Congestion Charge** and the **Fire and Rescue Service Review**, where I encouraged parish input to ensure rural needs were recognised. In the latter case, I’m pleased to report that that revised proposals are now being discussed that avoid fire station closures or the reduction of fire engines in Thame from 2 to 1.

Supporting Communities and Looking Ahead

I promoted support available to residents, including the **Resident Support Scheme** and **Home Upgrade Grants**. My **Councillor Priority Fund** was allocated to **Cosy Homes Thame, Thame Pride** and the **Chalgrove & Watlington First Steps Family Hub**. These three causes tie in very closely to my driving principles of community inclusion, tackling climate change and supporting families.

I look forward to resuming work and continuing to support all parish and town councils across the division from early May.

4b. Observations of District Councillor David Turner

Whilst David gives a monthly report to all the Parish Councils and Parish Meetings in Chalgrove District Council Ward this report is a summary of the last year.

Major upgrades have taken place at all the five leisure centres run by SODC. They have included:

- Major efficiency gains to reduce carbon emissions including LED lighting, solar panels on the roofs of the buildings and up-graded heating systems.
- Upgrades of wet areas which were looking tired.

New 5 Year Local Plan (2041)

The last Local Plan covered the period to 2035. The new plan has gone through the initial public hearings with the final public hearings due to commence late June/ early July.

Planning Issues

These have dominated the last 6 months with Chalgrove seemingly under siege from developers. A major concern is the land to the East of Chalgrove. This site was refused by SODC and at a public appeal by the National Planning Inspectorate. The developer then re-submitted the same plan 6 months later which was refused again by SODC. The developer then appealed again to the National Planning Inspectorate and to our dismay they approved it. I have personally always had





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL

Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

faith in the independence of the Planning Inspectorate, but that view is now shattered. It seems that the Government push for more homes has had an influence. SODC took advice from two barristers who both said that we would not win a Judicial Review because you have to demonstrate due process had not been followed. Chalgrove cannot be called NIMBYS when you consider that we have seen a 35 percent growth over the last few years.

Chalgrove Airfield

You will recall that Homes England withdrew their last application following the Civil Aviation Authority saying it was dangerous to life given how close the runways were to the proposed homes. Homes England have said they would submit another application with a single runway to the North of the Airfield which Martin Baker have said will not meet their needs. I have regular meetings with James Martin of Martin Baker who informs me that to relocate to another site even if one was available would cost his company 45 Million pounds. Our MP Freddie Van Mierlo and County Councillor Judith Edwards have also been to see James Martin. Freddie has been in touch with the Government Defence Minister discussing how it will negatively affect a UK major defence contractor and how important that is in these dangerous international times. I understand that one of the American airmen who ejected over Iran said "Thank goodness for Martin Baker!" We must keep up our campaign against an airfield housing development and I thank Paul Boone and his SHIELD team for their campaign against a possible development.

Brown Bins

This is an optionable payable service for collection of green waste which is then composted and sold to land owners for soil improvement. Once a year it is possible for people to take their own sacks to a collection site and get free compost. People who use the service have asked why you have to buy a sticker for a brown bin every year. The reason being is the turnover of home ownership so that people who use the service are not paying for new residents' who have not opted into the payable service. Remember if your next collection is between 20th April and 1st May you can put out up to 4 extra sacks. This is because we suspend the service over Christmas.

Waste Collection Vehicles

During the year SODC has purchased electric waste collection vehicles which has helped reduce SODC's carbon footprint.

Post Office

We have all been sad at the loss of the post office and it has not been possible to find an alternative site. For many years the owner of the post office site has been subsidising it and that has come to an end. The big turnout of Chalgrove people when Jill Spicer and colleagues reached the end of their long spell showed how much their work was valued. A collection for Jill raised over £1500 which Jill was very grateful for. Freddie Van Mierlo is trying to get the post office to reinstate a post box in the centre of the village. I understand that there will be a celebration of the local post office staff on 10th May between 2 PM and 4 PM.





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

SODC Grants

SODC makes several grants available to be applied for local community purposes. In the summer details of these grants will appear on the SODC website. As District Councillor I have a budget of £7500 for the four parishes which I represent. Last year I awarded grants for such things as the Chalgrove Children's Centre, the Village School, The Chalgrove May Day Festival, community benches and facilities in recreation grounds, Chalgrove Cavaliers and a Wildlife and Conservation society who work closely with the River Thame Conservation Trust.

SODC Budget

This year we set the 3rd lowest District Council Tax in England. When my group took over in 2019 the officers informed us that the council was heading for bankruptcy in 6 years' time. As cabinet member for finance I took £2M out of the first budget and that means together with other subsequent measures that the threat has now been removed.

Local Government Review

The Government is determined to scrap District Councils and replace them with new Unitary County Councils. The key question is the size of the Unitary Councils. There are various proposals including a Unitary whole of Oxfordshire or two smaller ones. Recent decisions by Government in the County of Essex has recommended several smaller more local unitary councils. My personal view is for two Unitary Councils for Oxfordshire splitting the County into basically a North and South split. I feel this will be much more locally sensitive. There are proposals to join Swindon and or Reading with Oxford, a proposal which I do not support.

5) Responsible Financial Officer's Report – Craig Tribe

Craig gave an overview and stated that copies of the accounts were on the table for viewing, and said that if a copy was needed, to email him and he will send a copy.

Rob Workman and Andy Batt were mentioned by Craig and he gave thanks to them both for all of their hard work. He also asked if there was anyone who would like to take on the role of Parish Councillor.

Responsible Financial Officer's Report

On behalf of the Parish Council I present the unaudited receipts and payments accounts of the Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Receipts for the year totalled £13,190. This compares with £28,278 in the previous year. In the previous year grants of £11,235 and donations of £4,500 were received towards village projects. None were received in 2025-26. The main sources of income were the parish precept of £9,560 and VAT recovered of £3,316.





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

Total payments for the year were £17,773 compared with £33,732 in the previous year. Again it was the various projects in 2024-25 that were the main reason for the substantial decrease in expenditure. The new expenditure item in this year was staff costs. This relates to the salary for the Parish Clerk which was not budgeted for. Another expense which was not expected was legal and professional fees of £4,252 relating to the planning appeal public inquiry for the planning application at the land next to The Orchard.

There was a net deficit for the year of £4,583. This compares with a deficit last year of £5,455.

The Parish Council accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis. This means that there are sometimes time differences as to when income and expenditure are recognised in the accounts.

Total reserves carried forward to 2026-27 were £19,086. A reserves summary is shown at the foot of the unaudited accounts. Of the total amount, all but £5,308 was allocated for specific purposes.

Although not part of its legal powers the Parish Council does support some local charities. In 2025-26 we donated £200 to the Friends of Benson Library, £210 to Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire and £300 to St John Ambulance. St John Ambulance provided two training sessions to parishioners on CPR and use of the defibrillator.

Up until September 2025 this Parish Council had been fortunate in having a succession of Parish Clerks that provided their services pro bono. This is not standard as all parish councils normally pay a salary to the Parish Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer. In September 2025 we recruited Angie as Parish Clerk in replacement for Julian. No budget for staff costs was included in 2025-26 but obviously this needs to be allowed for in 2026-27. Because of this it has been necessary to ask for a substantial increase in the parish precept. The precept is the amount that parish councils charge their parishioners, via the council tax, to meet their budget requirements. For 2026-27 the Parish Council agreed an increase in the parish precept of 51%, which amounts to an increase of £27.42 for a Band D payer. It is expected that increases in future years will return to their previous level.

The Parish Council balances the need to maintain strong reserves to provide funding for future projects for village improvements whilst avoiding too much extra expense for our Parishioners. This year we are budgeting for break even.

6) Berrick Salome Parish Drainage Group – Rupert Coghlan (Neil Godfrey presented report in Rupert's absence)

Jim Whitworth introduced Neil and gave a brief overview of BSPDG – Jim stated that there have been no major rain or water events so far this year. At the beginning of 2025, 4 flood relief barriers were put in but they have not been tested yet. Jim asked if there was anyone who would like to join the Drainage Group, and if so, please let Neil/Jim/Angie know.





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

Thames Water Phase 1 sewer lining should be complete in 2nd week in June for Rokemarsh. Was due to be done in March but it was too wet and it takes 6 weeks to obtain permission for road closures.

Grants

Grant funding is available from OCC for flood mitigation projects.

These projects are likely to be a mix of:

- Improving flow of existing drainage watercourses
- Reinstating and/or modifying current or historic drainage watercourses
- New drainage watercourses
- Water retention and controlled release using attenuation ponds, barriers and/or existing flood areas

One project already completed:

- The baffles in the watercourse in the direction of the HSH from the B4009.
- Not fully tested by the weather yet but designed to slow down the flow and reduce the volume of water moving towards Roke during periods of heavy rain
- Modelled on a similar project in Chalgrove

This year BSPDG are applying to OCC for funds to use external specialist consultants to identify and evaluate recommendations for potential future work in the parish, to mitigate flood risk, based on the topography and existing water flows.

If we are able to commission this survey, BSPDG will then use this to determine plans for future physical work and associated grant applications. Inputs from other sources will also be taken into account to propose projects which will have the highest impact in terms of flood mitigation and therefore, have the best chance of securing grant funding from OCC in future rounds.

When the survey work is underway, open parish meetings will be used to engage with landowners and other stakeholders to explain target project objectives and agree prioritisation of future projects and funding options.

Alongside this, the Group will endeavour to build its skill base through additional members joining as well as harnessing community support, in the execution of agreed projects.

Thames Water

The relationship between the parish and TW is better than it was:

- Dedicated POC and we get responses
- More work in the past year than we have seen TW do in the past 20 years





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

That has resulted in certain damage to roads/verges etc. but BSPDG are chasing Thames Water to undertake repairs.

- Important to stress we are not anti TW
- Our target is to enable a functional sewer system across the parish
- We see a collaborative approach, not a combative one, as being the best way forwards
- Focus is to have sound operational communication with TW with regular review
- Not quite there yet, but again...working on it.

In terms of what is coming up:

- Pressing hard for repairs
- 2nd week of June final sections of sewer lining and manhole sealing in Rokemarsh
- Delayed from March due to high groundwater at the time
- Subject to road closure permission from OCC Highways

There have also been various small upgrades made to Rokemarsh PS including a new pump fitted.

BSPDG are working to secure review meetings to press TW to share data and information on their current and future plans and the impact these works may have.

FvM's office is being kept up to date on developments and they are keen to join in the review meetings.

In the meantime BSPDG will continue to update parishioners through the regular parish email update.

7) Berrick Salome Quarry Chariry – Abbie Clayton (Angie Barker presented report in Abbie's absence)

Charity Overview

The Quarry Charity brings in a rental income of £2000 per annum from the business on the B4009 on an old disused quarry. The Charity exists to administer these funds for projects or equipment which benefit the community of Berrick Salome Parish (Berrick Prior, Berrick Salome, Roke and Rokemarsh). Anyone can apply for funding on behalf of an organisation or village project. The Trustees, a small group of villagers administer these funds on behalf of the village. Anyone interested in getting involved or applying for funds should contact Abbie Clayton, Chair of Trustees who can be contacted on 07738319200 or abbsclayton@gmail.com

Current Committee – New members

Alongside Abbie Clayton as Chair, Julie Bird and Monica Hyde, Peter Snellgrove and Tracey Comber are trustees.





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

Current Funds

In March 2025 the balance stood at £12,737.41.

Our income since our last report in May 2024 has been £2000.00 derived from rent received from the Wilkinson's Wood Yard site on the B4009; interest of £124.48 has also been received.

One request, although approved earlier in the year, was paid out later in April last year so has come out of this year's figures, which was £501.76 for the liner and gravel for the village pond project.

In March 2026 the Quarry Charity's bank balance stands at £14,360.13.

8) Berrick Salome Relief In Need Charity – Graham Cooper (Jane Franklin presented report in Graham's absence) Report and Accounts of the Berrick Salome Relief in Need Charity for the year to 31 August 2025

The Charity was set up to provide grants of money, provision of items or provision of facilities for persons in need living in the Parish of Berrick Salome. These grants are to relieve, either generally or individually, persons resident in the beneficial area (viz Berrick Salome, Berrick Prior, Roke and Rokemarsh) who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.

In recent years, and in view of the changed demographics of the Parish, the Trustees have extended the scope of grants to include specific expenses of an educational or extracurricular nature for students within the Parish which will help that person to achieve their potential. The Charity is in discussion with the Charity Commission to formalise this change in scope.

Income is received from rent from a parcel of agricultural land and a fixed interest investment plus interest on accumulated income.

- The income for the year to August 2025 was £1,385.
- Three grants totalling £920 were made during the year.
- The balances held at the two bank accounts at 31 August 2025 were £13,073.

The Trustees of the Charity are:

- The Rev Dr Michael Lakey (ex-officio as The Rector for the time being of St Helen's Berrick Salome)

Nominative trustees appointed by the Parish Council of Berrick Salome:

- Mrs J Franklin (Chairman)
- Mr G Cooper (Treasurer)

Co-optive trustees appointed by special resolution of the Trustees with special knowledge of the Parish:

- Mrs S Clayton





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

- Mrs S Derbyshire
- Mr G. Cooper (grahamcooper95@gmail.com) acts as administrative officer.

9) Village Hall Management Committee Annual Report 2025 – John Bird and Andy Batt

As most of you know the village hall is run as a charity (CIO) separate from the parish council with a committee providing management and governance.

The vital role of Treasurer has been filled by Andrew Goss who kindly stepped up to replace Jonathan Parkinson, who we again thank for 14 years of support. There is now an efficient financial system in place which Andrew is managing. Other members of the committee are Andy Batt, Amanda Moser, who looks after safety and services, John Bird and Lesley Sixsmith, who represents the interests of Wallingford Bridge Club (WBC). For the last 12 years Julie Bird has managed bookings, cleaners and supplies and consumables for the hall.

Currently the VHMC has about £10500 in funds and a relatively stable income from WBC and Third Party hirers. In the last year the hall was redecorated throughout and we contributed 50% of the £6400 cost of 60 new chairs ie £3200, WBC paying the balance. These are high quality and most are made from aluminum, hence light and easy to stack.

The outlook for the coming year is stable with hopefully no major maintenance requirements, the main recurring headache being blocked toilets which we hope will have been resolved by a recent cleanout of the septic tank.

10) Allotments Report

Greg Broomfield gave thanks to Roger for representing the Allotment Tenants over the last year and gave an overview of current activity at the allotments. As the growing season has only just started, activity at the allotments has increased significantly over recent weeks. This includes two new Allotment Tenants joining our Allotmenters with one existing plot being allocated and one completely new plot being created. There is room on site for more plots and it is hoped that more parishioners will consider the opportunity of tending an allotment.

11) Benson Area Nature Group – Tracey Comber (Angie Barker presented report in Tracey's absence)

2025 saw some lovely progress at the wildlife pond. With help from volunteers, we tidied, removed excess thistles, planted wildflower areas and also native wetland plants like marsh marigold and yellow iris, kindly donated by a local resident. Wildlife is already thriving, with common newts, frogs, ducks, deer and many birds spotted. There's still more to do to shape this into a true wildlife haven. Please look out for volunteer sessions if you'd like to get involved.





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

In May 2025, together with support from local volunteers, we ran a Family Nature Day in the village hall grounds. It was a great success, with children enjoying activities like moth trapping, bug hunts, skull quizzes and owl pellet dissections, rounded off with wildflower planting. This year's event takes place on 9th May - we will be promoting details shortly. It promises to be another fun, nature-filled day for all the family.

We also had a fantastic turnout of over 20 residents on a sunny evening in July to help cut back long grass around our saplings. With cakes generously provided by local residents..

In February 2026, we hosted a screening of the film *A River Sings* in the parish hall. Joined by a panel of experts, we explored nature-based solutions to flood management. The evening sparked positive discussion, with over 37 people attending and we hope useful connections made.

Finally, a big thank you to Berrick Parish Council and all our volunteers who help care for our nature-friendly green spaces - your support makes a real difference.

12) **St Helen's Church Activities – Roger Derbyshire (PCC Vice Chair) and Marian Shaw (Church Warden) – This report covers the period from April 2025 to March 2026**

Background

We are very fortunate that our parish of Berrick Salome includes among its many assets the historic church of St Helen, which has been here for over a thousand years. Over the centuries its role may have changed somewhat, but nevertheless it remains closely connected with the village community to this day. This report is a brief overview of how the church operates, and some of the activities undertaken throughout this past year.

Church and Community Events

The church is led by the Parochial Church Council, or PCC - a small group of people who, with Father Michael, the Vicar, decide which services and activities will be run. We are required to pay our 'Parish Share' to the Diocese (over £17,000 annually) for the maintenance and upkeep of the church, and so each year we organise a number of community events to help raise funds. Such events include the Progressive Supper, the Open Gardens, the Garden Fete, the Sponsored 'Ride and Stride', the Village Quiz, and the Christmas Fair - with its Sausage Sizzle, Father Christmas and sing-along carols. We like to emphasise the FUN in our **FUN**raising, and are very grateful to all villagers who come and join in.

Church Services

St Helen's Church offers a weekly Sunday service, including a family service on the first Sunday of each month, providing an opportunity for young children - some as young as 6 years old - to read a lesson in public, and to join in with imaginative hands-on activities. As well as regular services, we have a Pet Blessing held in the churchyard, and a Harvest Thanksgiving Festival service and lunch. Processions at Easter and Christmas are becoming a tradition now, where Basil the 'Ponkey' (AKA a Shetland pony





BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL
Berrick Salome - Berrick Prior - Roke - Rokemarsh

pretending to be a donkey) leads us up Church Lane - and these have proved very popular. The candle-lit Christmas Eve Carol Service is usually 'standing room only', and we are lucky to have a Vicar who believes in children playing an active role, such as helping with the Easter Day family communion after their Easter egg hunt.

Church and Churchyard

If you don't normally come to church, do pop in from time to time to soak up the peace and tranquillity both inside and out. The interior of the church is adorned each week by a very professional flower team, and the church environs are maintained as a peaceful country churchyard and sanctuary for wildlife by the 'Holy Mowers'. Since being planted several years ago, the carpets of snowdrops and daffodils have expanded, and in the spring make a wonderful display.

Music and Bells

In conjunction with St Mary's, Chalgrove, a project is underway to develop a Junior Choir, with a choir leader recently appointed, so if you have children who would like to sing, do let us know. The two Choral Evensongs and Christmas Eve Carol service held last year also provided opportunities for interested villagers to join in with singing. We are lucky to have a ring of 6 ancient bells, and you will often hear them rung before services, or by visiting bell-ringers.

Treasurer

For many years we have relied on Rob Marsh to look after our finances and satisfy the stringent book-keeping demands of the Diocese. We are sad to see him leave us, but we welcome our new Treasurer, Sue Lyons, who has kindly agreed to take on this important role in his place.

Grateful Thanks!

We hope this has painted a picture of how our church works, and the teams of people who make it happen. It is a living part of the village, and whether you worship there or not, it is an important and traditional part of the village, so we need to preserve St Helen's for future generations of important life events, such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals. So when we put on a **FUN**draining event, you know why we are asking for your support.

13) Appointments of representatives (if any) to other organisations

There were none

14) Any other Business

The Home Sweet Home re-opened today

