

MINUTES OF AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE CLIFTON HAMPDEN AND BURCOT PARISH

COUNCIL HELD ON FRIDAY 18 APRIL 2025

At 19.30 in the Village Hall

1. Present

Councillors: Christine McCulloch (Chair), Nick Fielding, Suzanne Neave, Paul Schenk.

In the absence of a Parish Clerk, minutes will be based on a recording.

Members of the public: 15

2. Apologies for absence

Marc Juffkins

3. Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2025 were **agreed and signed** as a correct record.

4. Chair's Introduction.

The Chair welcomed members of the public to what would be the last meeting of this Parish Council and apologised for calling the meeting on a public holiday, but this was the only opportunity for a quorate meeting.

The Chair thanked Charlotte Ray (Burls) for her work as Parish Clerk from December 2024 to April 10, 2025. This was the second time Charlotte resigned, the first being caused by rudeness of a member of the public, This time, Charlotte had found that the amount of work involved exceeded her availability. A locum Parish Clerk would be sought.

Cllr Dougie Anscombe-Stephen resigned on 28 March and Rory Maxwell on 12 April. The Chair, Cllr. Fielding, Cllr. Juffkins, Cllr Neave and Cllr Schenk intend to resign on 30 April. Notices advertising the two casual vacancies are on display on the parish notice boards, but co-option is difficult in these circumstances and a request from 10 parishioners for an election to be held may be the best way forward.

5. Public participation

Two residents complained about this emergency meeting being held at short notice. The Chair said the meeting could not have been arranged earlier because of the sequence of resignations and the limited availability of Councillors to attend. The meeting notices were displayed on 14 April giving statutory notice, and an email was sent out to inform the parish.

One resident complained that members of this Parish Council had undermined the previous Parish Council in its promotion of a Neighbourhood Development Order.

A resident asked for the reasons why the councillors were resigning. Cllr Neave said she had secured a new job, which involved relocation to Cambodia; her husband Cllr Schenk would be accompanying her; Cllr Juffkins was spending time in Australia for family reasons and does not expect to return until November; Cllr Fielding has put his house up for sale and is expecting to relocate to Kazakhstan and the Chair agreed with him that it was preferable for the whole Council to resign together so that any lingering hostility left over from the NDO division of opinion in the parish might be forgotten. The Chair

reported that Cllrs Anscombe-Stephen and Maxwell resigned claiming dissatisfaction with fellow councillors.

7 members of the public left the meeting.

6. Report from the South Oxfordshire District Council

Grant schemes for Everyone Active and Capital Grants for community projects were **noted**.

7. Flood Committee Report and approval of grant for flood mitigation works.

The Council has been awarded a grant from Oxfordshire County Council to install wooden baffles in a local ditch for flood mitigation.

The Council **resolved to accept the grant** subject to clarification of the insurance cover for ongoing liabilities before the work commences.

8. Recreation Field

a) Consideration of maintenance costs.

The Cricket Club request funds towards maintenance of the recreation field and related equipment.

The Council **resolved to**

a) **approve £1900** (£400 to tractor maintenance and £1500 for the gang mower maintenance) subject to receipts and confirmation that the equipment remains the property of the Parish council.

b) Encourage the Cricket Club to seek separate grants for additional, specialist equipment (e.g. wicket mower, roller)

c) Rubbish Clearance and Skip Hire

A clean-up of the Recreation Ground and buildings is planned.

The Council **resolved to:**

Fund a skip to support this collaborative effort, coordinated with the Cricket Club and other users.

Explore shared use of the cleared-out tea hut for flood group equipment storage

d) **The litter bin** near the play area had been filled with dog waste and presented a hygiene hazard. Dogs were not permitted on the Recreation Field.

The Council **resolved:** a) to accept the kind offer of Chris, a volunteer, to remove the bin entirely to prevent further misuse.

b) update signage at the entrance to the Recreation Field to clearly state "No dogs allowed."

9. Wharf

A picnic table on the Wharf has deteriorated and is beyond repair.

The Council **resolved** to ask Martin Drew to remove the damaged table and to cut back the brambles obstructing the use of the seat carved out of a fallen tree trunk.

Council **recommended** that replacement furniture might include a bench easier to use for people with limited mobility. Any new furniture should respect the rare vegetation

identified in the Nature Recovery plan and bird nesting sites. New furniture would need to be firmly secured or light enough to be moved in response to frequent flooding of the area.

9. Finance

- a) The Council reviewed its annual insurance premium. The Council **resolved** to approve payment of £1,237 for the insurance renewal for one year.
The Council **recommended** that the policy should be reviewed in detail before further renewals.
- b) With the resignation of the Parish Clerk, no Financial report had been received.
The Council **resolved** to employ a locum Parish Clerk as soon as possible to manage the Finance and to liaise with the appointed Internal Auditor.
- c) Once all resignations had been received, responsibility for the essential work of the Council would be undertaken by SODC until a new Council is formed.

11. Annual Parish Meeting.

It was proposed that the Annual Parish Meeting advertised for Friday 23 May should be moved to Wednesday, 21 May to avoid the start of the half-term holiday and to encourage greater participation.

The Council **resolved** to confirm the availability of the Village Hall for the new proposed date and to seek a volunteer to organise the meeting possibly as an interactive community forum to gather views on key topics such as: recreation play area, traffic, shared use of the Recreation Field, community events, flooding,

12. Close of meeting

A resident thanked the Council for its many achievements at a difficult time.
The meeting closed at 21.37.