Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Caversfield Parish Council held on Wednesday 21 May 2025 (following the Annual Parish Meeting) at 7.56pm in Fringford Village Hall

Present: Cllr Fiona Hitchcock, Cllr June Nisbet, Cllr Glenice Sutcliffe (Chairman), Cllr Alan Tennant
In attendance: 1 member of the public; Natalie Cross (participated as a Councillor from Item 11. a.); Mrs Jane Olds (Parish Clerk); Cllr Will Boucher-Giles (OCC)
Apologies: Cllr Roger Shipway

The Annual Parish Meeting, which preceded the Parish Council meeting, had held a minute silence to acknowledge the tragic events of Thursday 15 May at Bicester Motion when two firefighters, Jennie Logan and Martyn Sadler, and a member of the public, Dave Chester, had died in a fire.

1. **To elect the Chairman for the year 2025/26**
   Cllr Nisbet proposed, and Cllr Tennant seconded the proposal, that Cllr Sutcliffe be elected as Chairman. The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to elect Cllr Sutcliffe as Chairman.

   Cllr Sutcliffe signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

2. **Apologies for absence** – to receive apologies
   Apologies were received from Cllr Shipway.

3. **To elect the Vice Chairman for the year 2025/26**
   The Council **RESOLVED** to agree not to elect a Vice Chair.

4. **Requests for Dispensations, Declarations of interest, gifts and hospitality** – to receive any requests for Dispensations, Declarations of Interest from Councillors relating to items on the Agenda, in accordance with the Council's code of conduct
   Nothing was declared.

5. **Public participation** – to receive questions from members of the public relating to items on the Agenda, in accordance with the Council's code of conduct and standing orders
   2 members of the public attended the meeting.

6. **To welcome RAF Croughton Commander and UK MoD Officer** – to receive an update on MoD issues
   The Chair had welcomed the newly-appointed Community Relations Adviser – Abigail Jeffs – to the Annual Parish Meeting.

7. **Reports from District and County Councillors** – for information only
   Cllr Boucher-Giles had reported to the Annual Parish Meeting.

   The District Councillors had sent their apologies.

8. **Reports from the Village Management Companies and Residents' Groups**– for information only
   Springfield Road Management Company had nothing to report. No further reports had been received.

9. **Minutes** – to confirm the Minutes of the meetings held on 19 March and to note the omission of the confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 18 December from the January minutes.
   It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Full Council meeting on 19 March and the minutes of the meeting on 18 December be accepted as a true record. The Minutes of the March meeting were signed by the Chairman.

10. **Update on progress from the previous Minutes** – the Clerk / Chair will report on progress of outstanding items which do not require further decision
    a. **Policy Review**
       The Financial Regulations, the Freedom of Information policy and Publication Scheme, the Gifts and Hospitality Policy together with the Social Media and Electronic Communications policy had been updated and published.

    b. **Fringford Road Rubbish Bin**
       The bin had been ordered and was awaiting delivery.

       The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to pay the invoice between meetings if necessary.

    c. **Skimmingdish Lane Noticeboard**
       The Clerk had not had the opportunity to look into the locking mechanism further.

11. **Governance**
    a. **Councillor Co-options** – to consider any applications received for the two vacant seats
       The position had been advertised. The Council had received one application from Natalie Cross. Following consideration, Cllr Hitchcock proposed, Cllr Nisbet seconded the proposal, and the Council **RESOLVED** to agree to co-opt Natalie Cross to the Council.

       Natalie Cross completed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and joined the Councillors.

b. Policy Review – to consider the following policies

i. Dispensations Procedure and Form

The Council considered the procedure and form and **RESOLVED** to agree to adopt the documents.

ii. Internal Financial Control Policy

The Council considered the policy and **RESOLVED** to agree to adopt it.

iii. Scheme of Delegation

The Council considered the scheme and **RESOLVED** to agree to adopt it.

c. Risk Assessment – to review and agree the Risk Assessment for 2025/26

The Council considered the Risk Assessment together with a new Risk Strategy explanation and **RESOLVED** to adopt the documents with the recommended updates.

d. Councillor responsible for internal financial control – to consider and agree the appointment

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to appoint Cllr Hitchcock as Councillor Responsible for Internal Financial Control.

e. Information Logs – to review and note:

The Council **RESOLVED** to review and note the following logs:

i. Freedom of Information Disclosure Log
ii. Gifts and Hospitality Log
iii. Training and CPD Log

12. Finance

a. Financial Report and Year End Budget Monitoring Report – to receive the reports for information

As at 30 April, the accounts stood at:

Co-op Current Account	£14,827.58
Co-op 35-day Deposit Account	£8,110.94

Income		**Date received**
OCC Locality Fund (for SIDs)	£2,938.92	7/3/25
Precept (1st tranche)	£5,000.00	9/4/25
Deposit account interest	£82.20	4/4/25

Outstanding Payments

None

Debit Card Payments

None

Standing Orders and Direct Debits

Date cleared	SO / DD	Payee and reason	Budget	Minute ref	Amount
11/3/25	DD	Three – February mobile contract	Admin costs	15/5/24 10. c.	£7.56
17/3/25	SO	JMC Olds Clerk's Salary 17 February – 16 March	Clerk's salary	20/11/24 10. f.	£208.65
11/4/25	DD	Three – March mobile contract	Admin costs	19/3/25 10. d.	£8.04
17/4/25	SO	JMC Olds Clerk's Salary 17 March – 16 April	Clerk's salary	15/1/25 5. b.	£250.33

The VAT Reclaim of £639.32 for 1 April 24 to 31 March 25 was submitted on 28 April.

b. Bank Statements – to acknowledge scrutiny and acceptance of the previously circulated bank statements
The Council received the bank statements.

c. Internal Financial Control – to receive a report from the Councillor responsible for internal financial control
Cllr Hitchock reported that she had made her inspection on 16 May and all was in order.

d. Hall Hire – to consider the venue for Parish Council meetings and confirm the hall hire rates
The Council considered the hall hire rates. The Chinnery Room cost was £12.50 per hour and the main hall (should it be necessary) would cost £15 per hour. The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to accept the rates and continue to meet at Fringford Village Hall.

e. Banking – to consider the bank mandate and confirm signatories
The Council considered the bank mandate and **RESOLVED** to agree that the current arrangements were satisfactory.

f. 2024/25 Unspent Budget Items
The Council considered the unspent budget items and **RESOLVED** to agree to vire the following to the new financial year:

Grants	£350.00
Rubbish Bin	£350.00
Open Spaces Society Annual Subscription (unpaid from 24/25)	£45.00
Snow Clearance (to Reserves)	£250.00

g. Budget – to agree the budget for 2025/26
The Council considered the budget, taking into account the virements and Reserves, and **RESOLVED** to accept it.

h. Reserves – to confirm the Reserves for 2025/26 and consider the Policy
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to the policy and the following Reserves:

Running costs	£2,000.00
Election expenses	£1,900.00
Noticeboard repair / renewal	£1,030.00
Clerk Laptop, printer and scanner	£955.00
Bus shelter repairs	£800.00
Bus shelter lighting	£500.00
White gate refurbishment	£550.00
Street furniture renewal	£1,300.00
Insurance excess	£250.00
Audit reserve	£200.00
Snow clearance reserve	£850.00
Road safety	£3,138.92
Staff sickness	£300.00
Defibrillator	£237.00
General fund	£900.00

i. Annual Subscriptions and Regular Payments – to consider and agree the list
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to approve the list of regular payments:
Subscriptions:
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
Community First Oxfordshire
Society of Local Council Clerks
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Open Spaces Society
Clerk salary: monthly by Standing Order
Hall hire: bi-monthly
Dog bin emptying: twice yearly – March / April and September / October
Information Commissioner: annual - £52 by direct debit in January (note updated cost)
Internal Auditor: annual
Skimmingdish Lane, Fringford Road and Old School Close grass cutting and Fringford Road weed spraying
Office 365 Annual Subscription: annual
Web hosting and domain name renewal: annual
Bus shelter cleaning

j. Staff Expenses – to confirm the rates for the Clerk's expenses
The Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the Clerk's expenses

- Printing black: double sided A4 – 11p per sheet; single sided A4 - 6p; double sided A3 – 26p; single sided A3 – 14p
- Printing colour: double sided A4 – 30p per sheet; single sided A4 - 15p; double sided A3 – 56p; single sided A3 – 30p
- Laminating: A3 – 70p per sheet; A4 – 40p per sheet
- Postage: standard advertised cost of stamps
- Envelopes: DL envelope – 8p; C6 envelope – 5p; C5 envelope – 6p; C4 envelope – 13p
- Mileage at 45p per mile as per HMRC guidelines.

k. Statement of Accounts – to consider and approve the Statement of Accounts for the year end 31 March 2025
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to the Statement of Accounts which had been circulated.

l. Asset Register – to confirm the Asset Register for the year 2024/25 and set an appropriate minimum value of assets for the asset register
The Assets List could be found within the Statement of Accounts document.

The Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the Asset Register value of £13,278.93 which included the addition of the defibrillator and the laptop. The full Asset Register would be published on the website.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree that the appropriate minimum value of assets purchased by the Parish Council for the register would be £100, with the proviso that other items, which were of value, but which had been given to the Council, but not purchased by the Council, generally be included at a value of £1.

m. Internal Audit

i. To receive and review the report from the Internal Auditor
The Council **RESOLVED** to receive the report and noted the following recommendations:
- to add a permanent reference to the payment schedule stating the statutory power (actioned);
- to update the Standing Orders with the 2023 Procurement Act information;
- when considering the insurance renewal to include in the minutes that the council had considered whether the current level of insurance cover was still appropriate and adequate;
- to record the bank reconciliations in the minutes;
- to ensure that a Chair is elected at the staffing committee meeting.

ii. To consider the appointment of the Internal Auditor for 25/26
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to appoint Mrs Helen du Bois for a further year with the cost to be confirmed.

n. AGAR Signature Redaction – to consider redaction of the signatures on the web version of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return to protect the signatories from 'specific and identifiable threats' of identity theft and GDPR concerns

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to redact the signatures on the web version of the AGAR acknowledging that this was against the Accounts and Audit Regulations, but that it was to protect the signatories from the specific and identifiable threats of identity theft. There was no issue with the full documents being viewed in person.

o. External Audit

Prior to the consideration of the AGAR form, the Clerk outlined its purpose and provided the Council with a document which reviewed the effectiveness of the internal controls and which the Council **RESOLVED** to agree.

i. Certificate of Exemption – to consider whether to complete a Certificate of Exemption from submission to the External Auditor due to being under the £25,000 threshold or to have a Limited Assurance Review

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to complete a Certificate of Exemption from submission to the External Audit and agreed the figures of £13,825.00 for the annual gross income and £9,120.00 for the annual gross expenditure as stated in the Statement of Accounts. Both figures were below the £25,000 threshold.

ii. Section 1: Annual Governance Statement – to consider the questions and respond accordingly

Following receipt of the form covering the review of effectiveness of the internal controls, all the governance assertions were read out to the meeting; the Council **RESOLVED** to agree all the Statements. The Chairman and Clerk signed the form.

iii. Section 2: Annual Accounting Statements – to consider and agree the accounting statement figures

The Clerk provided the meeting with the figures and the Council **RESOLVED** to agree the Accounting Statements. The Clerk / RFO had signed the form prior to the meeting, the Chairman signed the form following the agreement.

iv. Electors' Rights – to note the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights as Tuesday 3 June to Monday 14 July 2025

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the dates which would be published on the noticeboard and website.

v. Statement of Variance – to consider the draft Statement of Variance

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the Statement of Variance.

p. Invoices for Payment – to consider invoices for payment itemised on the payment schedule

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following invoices for payment which Cllr Sutcliffe would authorise online.

Payee and reason	Budget	Minute ref	Net payment	Payment inc VAT*
Fringford Village Hall for May Hall Hire (invoice no FVH-20221552)	Hall Hire	20/9/23 10. c.	£37.50	£37.50
Cherwell District Council for winter dog bin emptying (Invoice no: 20022353)	Dog bin emptying	19/3/25 10. c.	£163.02	£195.62
Clean Slate for grant	Grants	19/3/25 10.	£100.00	£100.00
RJ Groundcare Ltd for April grass cutting (invoice no: 2954)	Grass cutting and weed spraying	15/1/25 10. d.	£330.00	£396.00
Open Spaces Society for annual subscription	Subscriptions	15/5/24 12. h.	£45.00	£45.00
Awaiting bank details for:				
Volunteer Driver Service for grant	Grants	19/3/25 10.	£100.00	£100.00
St John Ambulance for grant	Grants	19/3/25 10.	£100.00	£100.00

*Statutory Power used for all payments: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011 s.1

13. Training

a. NALC, OALC and SLCC – to consider any further training offered by NALC, OALC and SLCC

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the training courses and agreed that Councillors should attend any appropriate training if available.

Cllr Cross expressed an interest in the Councillor Fundamentals course on 9 October and would inform the Clerk of her availability in due course.

14. Planning

a. Planning Applications – to consider all recent Applications received from Cherwell District Council detailed below and any other Planning Applications submitted between the circulation of this Agenda and the meeting

i. None received

b. To note responses made between meetings using Scheme of Delegation

i. 25/00476/F at 5 Skimmingdish Lane, OX27 8UN for "Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension, glazed canopy and new access"
Received 26 March. Response: No comment or objection.

ii. **25/00736/F** at 12 Montgomery Road, OX27 8FG for "Two storey side extension" https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/Planning/Display/25/00736/F Received 1 April. Response: No comment or objection.

c. **Notices of Decision** – to note any notices of decision received

i. **25/00539/TCA** at Brashfield House, Buckingham Road, OX27 8RE for "G1 yew - fell x11 trees. G2 Horse chestnut, Sycamore and Holly - Fell x 6 trees." Approval granted 10 April

ii. **25/00144/TPO** at Land North Of Rau Court, Caversfield, Bicester for: "T824, Elm - Fell to near ground level (by Jan 2027). G825, Group of x5 Elm - Fell to near ground level (by Sept 2025); T826, Elm - Fel to near ground level (by Jan 2027). T827, Ash - Sever Ivy (by Sept 2025); T828, Sycamore - No Work. T829, Ash - Remove western stem over garden (by Sept 2025); T830, Elm - Fell to near ground level (by Sept 2025). T831, Elm - Fell to near ground level (by Sept 2025); G832, Group of x4 Elm - Fell to near ground level (by Sept 2027). T833 & T834, Oak & Chestnut - No Work. - Subject to TPO 12/2003". Approval granted 15 April

iii. **25/00476/F** at 5 Skimmingdish Lane, OX27 8UN, for "Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension, glazed canopy and new access". Permission for development 20 May,

d. **Appeal "24/00057/REF / 24/00245/OUT Appeal ref: APP/C3105/W/24/3355576**"at South Lodge, Fringford Road, OX27 8TH "Outline application for demolition of existing structures and erection of up to 99 dwellings, access, open space and associated works with all matters reserved except for access"

i. **To receive a report from attendance at the appeal enquiry**
Cllr Tennant reported that he and Cllr Shipway together with other representatives from the village had attended the first five days of the hearing which was due to conclude with two further days on 5 and 6 June. It had not been possible to attend virtually. The Councillors had provided the Inspector with a map of the pertinent areas to view on the site visit.

A re-consultation on the updated flood risk assessment and sequential test had been sent to the Council for consideration. The Council **RESOLVED** to agree that the Clerk, in consultation with Cllrs Tennant and Shipway, would provide a response which would be circulated to the Council for consideration prior to submission to Cherwell District Council.

ii. **To consider the proposal for the Parish Council to have responsibility for the play area in the development**
The Council considered the proposal briefly, but was of the opinion that not enough information was currently available.

The Council **RESOLVED** that it was not in a position to agree to the proposal at present, but should the Planning Inspector allow the appeal, the S106 agreement should make provision for the Parish Council to decide whether to take responsibility at a later date.

e. **Puy du Fou Consultation** – to receive an update
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to attend a meeting on 4 June after 5pm.

15. Climate Emergency – to receive a report
There was nothing further to report.

16. Parish Matters – to consider any parish matters

a. **Dog Waste Bins**

i. **MoD Proposal** – to consider the MoD's proposal regarding the removal of the dog waste bins from the MoD park
The Council noted that the MoD Proposal had not yet been finalised.

ii. **Additional bin** – to consider the adoption of the dog waste bin which the MoD did not take responsibility for
The Council noted that the Clerk had identified the bin and, on investigation of the maps, clarified that it was located at the edge of the park near Buckingham Road and was on MoD land.

As the bin was on MoD land it would not be possible for the Council to adopt it.

The Clerk would provide the MoD with the new information.

b. **White Gates** – to note the damage to the white gate on the southbound side of the Fringford Road nearest Southwold Lane and consider a replacement
The Council noted that the white gate on the southbound side of Fringford Road had disintegrated. The Clerk had asked OCC Highways if there was any S106 funding available to help with a replacement and was awaiting a response.

c. **Village Spring Clean** – to receive a report
The Chair reported that between 10 – 15 people had helped with the clean, three of whom had used the equipment provided by CDC. It was suggested that a further clean of the village be undertaken in the autumn.

d. **Speed Indicator Devices** – to receive an update
The Clerk had not made any further progress, but the Council noted that the solar panel from the device on Skimmingdish Lane had disappeared.

17. Reports from Meetings – to receive reports from any meetings attended

a. **OALC / OCC Day** – 3 April
The Clerk attended the day which had been useful. Anita Bradley – the OCC Monitoring Officer highlighted the importance of the County Charter and the commitment which OCC had to it. She and Liz Leffman also outlined some of the successes of the Council over the last year but acknowledged that the local government reorganisation would be critically important at a local level.

Antonio Ferrara presented about the Oxfordshire Story – a project to promote Oxfordshire to a wider audience which acknowledged that Oxfordshire was not just about Oxford.

Rian Harris presented about the County's tree project. OCC had plotted every tree which they have responsibility for in an online Tree Plotter.

Robin Rogers and Jacqui Cox then presented about developer schemes and S106 from a county perspective including Highways.

Following lunch, Helen Mitchell, Head of Public Affairs and Strategy gave an engaging presentation about the Local Government Reorganisation and reassured the parishes that they would be listened to.

Finally, Sean Rooney, Head of Service – Environment and Highways presented about the Highways team and the new contract with contractors Milestone (now the MGroup).

18. Attendance at Meetings – to consider attendance

a. **CDC Parish Liaison Meeting** – 11 June (6pm surgeries), Banbury
The Clerk hoped to be able to attend. Cllrs Cross and Sutcliffe expressed an interest in attending.

b. **Bicester Motion** – update meeting on the masterplan – 9 July (time tbc)
The Council noted the details but also recognised that due to the tragic events of the previous week, the meeting may need to be postponed.

c. **CPRE Oxfordshire AGM** – 7 June, 2pm
The Council noted the date.

19. Correspondence – to note correspondence received not otherwise on the agenda where decisions are not required

The Council had received correspondence from the Chair of Bucknell Parish Council regarding a combined Parish Council coalition to object to the Puy du Fou proposals.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to discuss the proposal at the next meeting.

20. Items for information or next Agenda only – all items for the next agenda to be submitted to the Clerk by Wednesday 2 July 2025

a. **Fringford Road** – debris from monitoring devices
It had been noted that camera monitoring devices had been installed on Fringford Road the previous week for 24 hours. On removal of the devices the installers had left large quantities of large used cable ties along the pavement which would be a damage to the environment. The Clerk would attempt to find out where to make an official complaint.

21. Date of next meeting

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree that the next meeting of the Parish Council would take place in the Chinnery Room of Fringford Village Hall on Wednesday 16 July at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 10.23pm

Signed …… Dated …….