Sutton Benger Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

held on Wednesday 12 March 2025 at 7.15 pm at the Sutton Benger Village Hall

Those present were noted as Councillors Adam Carwardine (Chair), Jan Campbell (Vice Chair), Jeremy Haselton (part), Claire Mansfield (part), David Spencer, David Thomson plus Sue Hart (Temporary Clerk) and Ward Councillor Greenman (part)
There were two members of the public.

141(24) **Apologies and Reasons for Absence**
Apologies were received from Daniel Errington (work) / Ruth Gaunt (holiday) / Garry Prewett (unwell). Councillors accepted the councillors' apologies.

142(24) **To approve the appointment of a Co-opted Councillor**
It was **resolved to approve** the appointment of Sean Morse as a co-opted councillor to Sutton Benger Parish Council. Sean signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and councillors welcomed him to the council. Cllr Morse joined the meeting.

143(24) **To approve the appointment of a temporary Responsible Financial Officer to carry out end-of-year accounting**
In order to comply with end of year accounting reporting requirements it was **resolved to approve** Mrs. Sue Hart as temporary Responsible Financial Officer should any financial duties be required in connection with year-end 2024/25 until the Responsible Financial Officer fully returned to work.

144(24) **Declarations of Interests from members regarding the agenda** *(In accordance with S31 of the Localism Act 2011)*
Cllr Campbell declared a pecuniary interest in PL/2025/01231 Little Manor, 3 Chestnut Road however this application was not voted on by the meeting.

145(24) **Public Forum Session**
A parishioner raised the question of ownership of the field behind Neville Terrace. The gate and fence have fallen into disrepair. There is no Public Right of Way across the field at this point, but the owner does have a right of access from the field into the public highway via Neville Terrace.
ACTION: Cllr Campbell to investigate ownership of the field.

A parishioner raised an issue about use of parking space at Neville Terrace and asked whether byelaws could be used by the Parish Council to enforce reasonable use of such space. In addition, a notice placed on the fence in between the parking and the gravelled area was a potential hazard.
ACTION: Clerk to investigate use of byelaws and Notice of Nuisance.
ACTION: Cllr Campbell to investigate ownership of the fence and possible unauthorised signage.

146(24) **Minutes for Approval**
To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 12 February 2025
On a proposal from Cllr Thomson it was **resolved unanimously** to accept the minutes as a true record and they were signed by the Chair.

147(24) **Finance**
1. To approve the monthly accounts statement and new invoices for payment
It was **resolved to approve:**
1. An invoice for £1,350 Chippenham LHFIG regarding Seagry Road Sutton Benger 2. A payment of £40 to Community First for Clerk's annual membership
3. An invoice for £230.00 to Marcus Anstie Ltd for bus shelter cleaning etc
4. An invoice for £90.00 to Marcus Anstie Ltd for bus shelter cleaning etc
5. An invoice for £40 to the Parish Newsletter

It was **resolved to approve** a payment of £326.49 to Cllr Adam Carwardine for the flood equipment storage shed invoice already paid to Shed Installers.

It was **resolved to ratify** a payment of £104.99 for annual renewal of Microsoft Family

2. **To recognize the work contributed by Nicola Hayward in getting NDP to and through the referendum**
It was **resolved to approve** the sum of £130 for a voucher for two to a neighbouring restaurant.

3. To review Benger Trails proposed annual Invoicing and payments
It was **resolved to approve** changing the invoicing system by Benger Trails to cover all running costs of the Benger Trails domain name/SSL certificate plus website hosting and maintenance to one annual invoice submitted from November 2025 onwards. The invoices until then to be submitted as incurred.

4. To resolve on work required to carry out Defibrillator maintenance
It was **resolved to approve** the budget sum of £159.50 for the Wellesley Arms defibrillator maintenance.

5. **To approve the new finance policy (not formally resolved following Extraordinary Mtg in February)**
The new finance policy had been updated and re-issued to councillors. On a proposal by Cllr Mansfield
It was **resolved unanimously to approve** the revised policy.

Cllr Errington has noted that he is unable to conduct any more budgetary management above that of authorizing and setting up online payments.

6. **To review the approach to be taken for the submission of the 2024/25 Annual Return**
Cllr Campbell has been in touch with the current clerk who has expressed the wish to do a phased return to work earlier than her planned 3-month absence and said she would be able to carry out the end of year accounts herself.
Councillors wished to ensure that the clerk would be well enough to complete the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) in time to submit to the Internal Auditor so this will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by Cllr Campbell. The possibility of additional support by an accountant would stay under review.
In was **resolved to approve** the current clerk carrying out the End of Year activities.
ACTION: Cllr Campbell and the Temporary Clerk to provide a summary list of the main activities to be completed prior to the May Parish Council meeting.

7. **To amend the temporary clerk's Terms of Agreement**
An increase in the temporary clerk's hours from 3 hours to 5 hours a week was reviewed and agreed. The Terms of Agreement were revised to reflect the increase in hours and following a proposal by Cllr Carwardine it was **resolved unanimously to approve** the revised Terms of Agreement. Cllr Carwardine signed the revised agreement.

It was **resolved to approve** an invoice for £761.44 to Kington Langley Parish Council for the temporary clerk's services from 12 Feb to 5 Apr 25.

148(24) **Planning**
New Applications for Consideration:
PL/2025/01264 5 Church Piece, High Street - Retrospective permission for a gated pedestrian access to rear wall (Deadline for comments: 31Mar25)
It was **resolved to support** the planning application.

PL/2025/02170 6 Park Lane - Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area (Deadline for comments: 25Mar25) Councillors had no objection to this application.

To note any Applications which passed their consultation expiry date prior to the current Parish Council meeting:
PL/2023/10642 Land East of Church View - Approval of Reserved Matters following outline approved under appeal for erection of 19 dwellings and associated infrastructure. The consultation deadline was 27Feb25.

PL/2025/01211 44 High Street - Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area. The deadline for comments was 1Mar25.
PL/2025/01231 Little Manor, 3 Chestnut Road - Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area The deadline for comments was 4Mar25.

Planning Updates:
Cllr Thomson updated councillors following attending Planning session also attended by Wiltshire Council officers and a number of Town and Parish Councils. The main topics covered were

- The Lime Down Solar Park Application for a Development Consent Order from the government
- An update on the National Planning Policy Framework particularly the new government's requirement for Wiltshire Council to show a 5-year housing land supply
- The Wiltshire Council Local Plan – being examined later this year
- Encouragement for the early involvement of Parish Councils in pre-application submissions.

Wiltshire Council Decisions, Appeals and Enforcement Updates
PL/2023/06204 - Land off the High Street - Outline planning application for erection of up to 60 dwellings, etc (Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decision: Allowed with conditions)

PL/2024/10951 - Land at Rockwell Cottage, 8 Sutton Lane - Erection of 2 dwellings with detached garages and associated ancillary equipment (Wiltshire Council Decision: Approve with conditions)
PL/2025/00129 Long Ridge House, High Street - Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area (Wiltshire Council Decision: No objection)

149(24) **Parish Councillor Elections 2025**
Elections for both Unitary and Parish Councils will take place on 1 May 2025 so all councillors will need to submit their nominations to Wiltshire Council before the deadline of 4pm on 2nd April.
Several e-mails from Wiltshire Council have already been forwarded to councillors giving them more information as applying was not as straightforward as it would appear. Cllr Carwardine said he would help any councillors if required.

150(24) **Annual Parish Meeting 2025** (To review the Statutory Requirement for an Annual Parish Meeting and consider suggestions for approach for 2025)
The Temporary Clerk has had a telephone consultation with a representative of the Society of Local Council Clerks, and it was confirmed that legislation does require parish councils to hold an annual parish meeting under the terms stipulated in the Local Government Act 1972, Part III, 14.

On a proposal from Cllr Thomson **it was resolved unanimously** that in light of the May elections and all the work involved in preparing for the VE celebrations at the same time, it would be difficult to organize a formal meeting this year before the legislative cut off of 1st June.

However, Cllrs Thomson and Morse agreed to work together to create a focal point for Sutton Benger Parish Council to be represented at the Saturday 10th May event on the recreation ground as an opportunity to facilitate communications with the parish. Cllr Hasleton proposed the creation of a questionnaire for before / during the event and Cllr Carwardine will help facilitate this through his next VE80 meeting on 8th April.

On a proposal from Cllr Carwardine **it was resolved unanimously** that an Annual Parish Meeting would be reinstated between 1st March and 1st June 2026.

151(24) **To consider a Proposal to set up Sub-committees for Human Resources, Planning and Finance and appoint Members and Chairs (For Resolution)**
Councillors considered the possibility of setting up Human Resources, Planning and Finance sub-committees. Following discussion, no formal conclusion was reached on whether these areas of Parish Council business should be formalized into sub-committees.

152(24) **Chair's Report**
Cllr Carwardine said he had attended the Chippenham Community Area Parish Forum at which there had been a presentation by the Wiltshire Chief Constable, Catherine Roper. He had raised the issue of the police working with Auto Speed Watch to deal with extreme speeders. The Chief Constable was non-committal but said 'she had heard what he had explained so clearly'.

Cllr Carwardine said that whilst at the forum, he had also taken the opportunity to speak to the Wiltshire Council Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Nick Botterill, about the outstanding visit to the travellers' site by their enforcement team. He was told that the matter is still in hand and a site visit is being planned. County Cllr Botterill was liaising with Ward Cllr Greenman to follow up.

153(24) **Clerk's Report**
There were no outstanding actions from the previous meeting.

154(24) **Neighbourhood Development Plan and Referendum**
Cllr Carwardine said that the number of votes from the referendum were 345 Yes and 16 No so the proposal had been Carried. From an electorate of 1076, 361 ballot papers had been issued making a good turnout of 33.55%.

155(24) **Highways, Parish Steward and Speed Indicator Device**
a) **Highways and Parish Steward –** There was no update this month.
b) **Speed Indicator Device -** Cllr Carwardine noted that reports haven't been in public domain, so he has arranged with Cllr Prewett to put reports on the website every month plus noting on the Community Facebook page. The Speedwatch team were struggling with numbers so finding it difficult to resource speed monitoring sessions.
c) Other Highways Matters - To consider whether the LHFIG should be approached regarding putting up a sign showing directions to the GP surgery. Councillors decided that no action needed to be taken.

156(24) **Allotments & Parish Assets -** To receive an update from Cllr Hasleton
Nothing to report.

157(24) **Flooding Emergency Plan**
Cllr Prewett had submitted a thank you to Cllr Carwardine for purchasing the shed and reported that it is now in place. Items from the other shed will be moved across the following weekend.

158(24) **Village Hall**
Cllr Mansfield said that the possibility of a covering for outside the village hall is still being looked at but is likely to go ahead. There is still no decision on what to do inside though equipment for the kitchen is needed, especially a dishwasher. A Line Dancing fund raiser was being organized for Saturday 22 March.

Grounds maintenance has previously been carried out by contractors but has not always resulted in the grounds being ready for specific events. As a result, the Village Hall Committee have submitted a CIL Grant Application to purchase a tractor and finisher/topper so that volunteers can do it themselves.

The tractor has already been organized so the CIL Grant Application is for a shed to put the tractor in plus a concrete base.
On a proposal from Cllr Haselton, councillors **resolved to unanimously to approve** a CIL Grant Application from the village hall for £1,016.00 for a steel storage shed.

Cllr Mansfield left the meeting at 21:19
Cllr Haselton left the meeting at 21:21

159(24) **Primary School**
Sutton Benger Primary School have submitted a CIL Grant Application in order that as part of the 80th Anniversary of VE day, 57 school children can participate in a trip to the REME Museum. The grant is to cover the cost of the coach and admission to the museum by the children.
On a proposal from Cllr Campbell, councillors **resolved to unanimously to approve** a CIL Grant Application from the school for £500 to cover the coach and cost of admission to the museum.

160(24) **Great British Spring Clean between 21st March and 6th A**pril
A villager had volunteered to help with this initiative which would need to be on Saturday 29 March. Cllr. Campbell said she would be willing to do any paperwork, e.g., Posters.

Ward Councillor Howard Greenman joined the meeting at 21:24.

161(24) **VE Celebrations - Update**
Cllr Carwardine said that £2,000 has already been signed off by the Parish Council but that monies from Barts / Church Piece Fund were still awaited. The event would be communicated in a specially designed April newsletter. Flyers and posters have already been designed. The event starts at 9 am on Thursday 8th May and finishes on Sunday 11th May when there will be a special Church Service.
Cllr Thomson was asked if he could confirm how many vintage tractors would be available to support the Saturday show and how much space they would require so that an adequate site can be provided for them as a site plan is in the process of being drawn up.
ACTION: Cllr Spencer to confirm with Cllr Errington.

162(24) **Exchange of information and Any Items for Consideration at Next Meeting**
To note any updates from councillors and to receive requests for items to be added to the agenda of the next meeting.
Ward Councillor Greenman said he was feeling a lot better and thanked councillors for their good wishes. He said that he was actively investigating traveller sites in North Wiltshire and the Sutton Benger Site was on the list to follow up. However, it would require more than just the enforcement officers to be involved before the site could be attended. There was also a need to look at unauthorized sites first.

163(24) **Date of Next Meeting**
To note date of the next Parish Council Meeting as **Wednesday 9th April 2025** at 7:15 pm in the Village Hall.

MEETING CLOSED AT 21:42

Signature .....

Date .....