

**Minutes of the Appleford-on-Thames Parish Council meeting duly convened and held in
Appleford Village Hall on Thursday 10 September 2026
from 19:37 to 21:55 hrs**

This version is DRAFT until signed at the next council meeting.

Present: Councillors Claire Rees (Chair), Victoria Shepherd, Louis Sharp

In attendance: Peter Stevens (County and District Councillor),
Judy McCarthy (Clerk)
Henry Eku, Planning Manager, ECU Energy Ltd

Members of the public: 5

1. Apologies for absence

Greg O’Broin had resigned as councillor on 7 September. The clerk informed Vale of White Horse District council and published the vacancy on 8 September. Apologies had been received from Cllr Mavrikis and were accepted. The meeting was quorate.

2. Requests for Dispensations, Declarations of interest, gifts and hospitality

Cllr Shepherd is a Trustee of the Appleford Parish Trust Charity.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 25 June 2026 were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

4. Reports from the community and village organisations

- a. The meeting welcomed Mr Henry Wright, Planning Manager, ECU Energy, who gave an introduction to ECU Energy as the current developer of the BESS battery storage site at Appleford, and updated regarding the proposed easement across land at the Appleford Community Orchard leading to the site.

The documentation regarding the easement across the council land to the site is progressing with ECU and the council’s legal representatives. Cabling will be underground. The site is scheduled to be operational in 2028, thereafter operational for up to 40 years. Road traffic during construction will be routed through Didcot and not Appleford.

The current site plan was distributed for information. The water tank on site must be 2 metres tall but will not be visible. Technical specifications for the infrastructure may change before operations commence. ECU will set up direct contact with Appleford during construction. A grant may be available from ECU

- community fund. ECU offered to attend a public meeting for residents at a later date to inform in more detail and answer questions or concerns.
- b. Appleford Community Project - Bonfire and Fireworks event This event is planned to take place on 8 November, the event will need volunteers to run successfully.
 - c. Soleluna Pizza has informed of a change of schedule to monthly visits on a Tuesday evening, commencing 15 September. The council has agreed to the van parking at the recreation ground during these visits.
5. **Public participation** – questions had already been directed to ECU energy during the previous item.
6. **Reports from District and County Councillor**
Cllr Stevens updated the meeting on various items including:
- HIF1 roadworks are continuing. The County Council is looking to set up the local working group in the next few weeks.
 - Hobbyhorse lane is now restored by Thames Water. FCC has made good the drainage structure to prevent flooding in future.
 - The local government reorganisation for Oxfordshire has been paused by central government but local elections next year will likely be for Vale of White Horse District Council rather than the new unitary.
 - Botley road re-opens shortly. Oxford traffic filters now in operation with 25 free annual passes but on trial for one year.
 - FCC liaison committee takes place next week, there have been complaints about the smell over the summer. The Environment Agency has raised concerns with FCC.
 - Thames Water reservoir (SESRO) : County and District Councils are working with Thames Water re local issues
 - Appleford traffic issues: The County Council has today written to the parish council for feedback on the 20 mph limit on Main Road. The Parish Council is concerned with lack of engagement from County Council to its concerns raised, also whether siting of traffic lights on the bridge are being progressed as part of the HIF1 road development
7. **Update on progress from the previous Minutes**
The Clerk reported on progress for the matters not requiring further decision and gave a progress update on actions in progress.
8. **Governance and Risk**
- a. Policy and Procedures
 - i. Cllr Sharp was appointed Councillor with responsibilities for ongoing financial control oversight and monitoring.

- ii. The council's Internal Control Procedure was reviewed with no further amendment.
 - ii. The Council approved the Planning Committee Terms of Reference.
 - iii. Councillors reviewed the General Data Protection Awareness Checklist for Councillors, and each returned a completed and signed form to the Clerk.
- b. Appleford Village Hall
 - i. The Heads of Terms proposed for the Lease of Village Hall to the Appleford Village Hall CIO were reviewed and approved. Clerk to send to legal representative to progress.
 - ii. Appleford Parish Council is Sole Trustee of the Appleford Village Hall CIO. Draft Rules and Terms of Reference for Appleford CIO to delegate to a Village Hall Committee were noted. The CIO will meet separately from the Council to confirm arrangements.
 - iii. The Village Hall Terms and Conditions of bookings has been updated to include acceptable use of broadband now this is provided.
- c. Risk
 - i. The Annual Risk Assessment – Playground and Recreation Ground – was reviewed. The Clerk has approached equipment suppliers of the rocking horse, children's climbing frame and the zipwire equipment for quotes to repair. Equipment may be replaced or upgraded subject to grant funding being available.
 - ii. The Council's Risk Assessment Schedule was reviewed, and actions agreed. A volunteer is needed to conduct the weekly playground review, although any issues are notified to the Clerk by users of the equipment.
 - iii. The adequacy of the Council's Insurance Policy was reviewed, with special consideration to the proposed village Bonfire and Fireworks event (see item 4.b. above). The insurer had confirmed to the Clerk that the organiser, Appleford Community Project, must have its own insurance policy and also evidence compliance with the terms of the Council's own insurance for the event to be held on Council land and property. The Council agreed that the ACP could hold the event as planned in November. The meeting did not identify any additional changes required to the Council's insurance policy overall.

9. Finance

- a. Notice of Conclusion of Audit 2026/27 was published on 31 August 2026.
- b. External Auditor Report and Certificate 2025/26 was reviewed and accepted.
- c. It was agreed to re-appoint Jane Olds as Internal Auditor for the 2026-27 annual return, and Heads of Terms of engagement were approved.
- d. Payments and Receipts against budget for year to date were presented by the Clerk and reviewed.
- e. Banking

- i. The previously circulated bank statements for months ending 30 June, 31 July and 31 August were reviewed and accepted.
- ii. Bank Reconciliation of accounts on 31 August 2026 was agreed with balances of:

Current account	£ 8,081.55
Instant access account	£ 20,455.10
- iii. Cllr Sharp was approved as authorising signatory to the Unity bank accounts and the mandate was signed. The bank has actioned the change for the Clerk as internet administrator to the accounts.
- f. Payments and Receipts
 - i. The following invoices were approved for payment. All invoices listed have been examined, verified and certified by the Clerk.

Total	Payee	Net	VAT	Description
£70.00	OALC	£58.33	£11.67	Councillor training: Inv 6487
£315.00	Moore	£262.50	£52.50	External Audit fee: Inv 339841
£26.00	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	-	-	Work from home allowance Sep
£6.00	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	£5.00	£1.00	SIM expenses Sep: Inv 1788226078313
£102.96	Pet Waste Solutions	£85.80	£17.16	Dog Waste collection Aug: Inv 66352
£173.70	The Play Inspection Company Ltd	£144.75	£28.95	Annual Inspection recreation ground: Inv 89015
£398.40	A.P.C Garden Services Ltd	£332.00	£66.40	Work carried out August: Inv 07835
£39.60	Starboard Systems Ltd	£33.00	£6.60	Monthly subscription Aug: Inv 21522
£535.50	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	-	-	Salary September

- ii. The following payments made since last meeting on 28 June 2026 were noted, as authorised at that meeting or by pre-authorised schedule agreed in May.

Date	Total	Payee	Net	VAT	Description
02.09.2026	£39.60	Starboard Systems Ltd	£33.00	£6.60	Monthly subscription - Scribe Inv 21522
31.08.2026	£7.00	Unity Trust Bank	-	-	Monthly bank charge
28.08.2026	£6.00	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	£5.00	£1.00	SIM expenses August Inv 17855475947758
28.08.2026	£26.00	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	-	-	Work from home allowance August
28.08.2026	£535.50	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	-	-	Clerk salary August
11.08.2026	£900.00	NW Electrical Services Ltd	£750.00	£150.00	Electrics work at village hall 20/07/26: Inv 2200
11.08.2026	£398.40	A.P.C Garden Services Ltd	£332.00	£66.40	Work carried out in June: Inv 07721

11.08.2026	£102.96	Pet Waste Solutions	£85.80	£17.16	Collections made in July: Inv 64889
11.08.2026	£116.00	SLCC	-	-	Annual membership renewal: Inv MEM259693-3
11.08.2026	£398.40	A.P.C Garden Services Ltd	£0.00	£398.40	work carried out July: Inv 07777
11.08.2026	£54.00	Gigaclear - Direct Debit	£45.00	£9.00	Village Hall Broadband August: Inv G14659545
03.08.2026	£39.60	Starboard Systems Ltd	£33.00	£6.60	Monthly subscription - Scribe Inv 20616
31.07.2026	£535.50	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	-	-	Clerk salary July
31.07.2026	£26.00	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	-	-	Working from home monthly allowance
31.07.2026	£6.00	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	£5.00	£1.00	SIM Expenses July: Inv 1782869053741
31.07.2026	£7.00	Unity Trust Bank	-	-	Monthly bank charge
22.07.2026	£102.96	Pet Waste Solutions	£85.80	£17.16	Dog Waste - June: Inv 63233
13.07.2026	£54.00	Gigaclear	£45.00	£9.00	Village Hall Broadband July: Inv G14300495
01.07.2026	£39.60	Starboard Systems Ltd	£33.00	£6.60	Monthly subscription - Scribe: Inv 20316
30.06.2026	£47.45	Greg O'Broin	£43.14	£4.31	OCC Scrutiny Committee - expenses
30.06.2026	£321.50	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	-	-	Clerk salary June 26
30.06.2026	£26.00	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	-	-	Working from home allowance June
30.06.2026	£7.00	Unity Trust Bank	-	-	Monthly bank charge
29.06.2026	£248.62	Elan City Ltd	£207.18	£41.44	2-year warranty extension: Inv SAJ-UK/2026/03577
29.06.2026	£398.40	A.P.C Garden Services Ltd	£332.00	£66.40	Works carried out in May: Inv 07599
29.06.2026	£420.00	NW Electrical Services Ltd	£350.00	£70.00	5-YR EICR electrics check at Village Hall: Inv 2172
29.06.2026	£6.00	Judith McCarthy, Clerk	£5.00	£1.00	SIM Expenses June : Inv
29.06.2026	£148.50	Play Inspection Co. Ltd	£123.75	£24.75	Playground inspection
29.06.2026	£102.96	Pet Waste Solutions	£85.80	£17.16	Dog waste collections - May: Inv 61662

iii. The following receipts since the last meeting were noted.

Date	Total	From	Purpose
07.09.2026	£12,000.00	VWHDC	Precept 2 nd instalment
20.07.2026	£952.20	HMRC	VAT refund Apr-Jun 2026

30.06.2026	£98.96	Unity Trust Bank	Interest Apr-Jun 2026
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- g. The NALC 2026-27 National Salary Award was accepted and the annual increase to Clerk's salary at new rate of £18.44 for scp23 effective as of 1 April 2026 with resulting back payment of £102.60 to the Clerk to cover the uplift for period 01 Apr – 30 Sep 26 was approved.
- h. The following quotes and other items were considered :
 - i. To replace two existing Defibrillators at The Knap and Village Hall
Supplier A: 908.34 each Supplier B: £895.00 each
It was approved to replace the current defibrillators, up to a total of £3000. The Clerk to seek feedback from the custodian of the 'roaming' kit before ordering.
 - ii. Repairs/replacement to paving slabs outside the village hall was considered and a new reserve of £3000 agreed for improving and maintaining the building and infrastructure was proposed, to be reviewed as part of the budgeting process. The Clerk to obtain further quotes for the slabbed area.
 - iii. Urgent window glass replacement at village hall was approved at the cost quoted of £170.00 + VAT.
 - iv. The Clerk has requested a quote from the original supplier for repairs to the Rocking Horse and Children's Multiplay equipment.
 - v. The Clerk has requested a quote from the original supplier for remaining repairs to the Zipwire, i.e. to replace the seat and tighten the chain.

10. Training and Subscriptions

- a. NALC, OALC and SLCC training schedule had been circulated.
- b. Training scheduled: Cllr Sharp is attending Councillor Fundamentals on 1 Oct
- c. The following guidance had been distributed for information:
 - NALC Local Councils Explained
 - National Planning Policy Framework
 - Q&A on the implications of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for Neighbourhood Planning
 - Charity Commission Local Government as Trustees

11. Planning and Environment

- a. New Planning Applications – Council noted the applications detailed on the Planning Schedule provided, and agreed to refer to the newly approved Planning Committee.
- b. Notices of Decisions – the following decision received were noted. See Planning Schedule for full details.
 - i. R3.0023/26 Details pursuant Cond 12 Approved 28 July
 - ii. R3.0022/26 Details pursuant Cond 4 CTMP: approved 2 September

- iii. R3.0041/26 Details pursuant approved 2 September
 - c. Appleford Parish Council Responses to planning applications –the following responses had been submitted by the Clerk as circulated. See Planning Schedule for full details.
 - i. to Vale of White Horse District Council
9 July: response to P26/V1357/RM re new housing on Land North of Hobbyhorse Lane Sutton Courtenay
 - ii. to Oxfordshire County Council
14 July: letter to County Council Cabinet Meeting
21 July: response to R3.0062/26 Condition 8 Appleford Sidings Bridge
5 August: further response to R3.0062/26 Condition 8 Sidings Bridge
12 August: response to R3.0022/26 CTMP River Crossing
24 July: response to MW.0092.26 s73 WTF - Objection
24 July: response to MW.0094.26 s73 MRF - Objection
 - d. Notices received
 - i. Temporary Footpath Closure – at Appleford on Thames, Footpath 106/8/10 & 373/31/10 : *Closure extended to November 2026.*
 - e. Meetings attended
23 July - HIF1 Stakeholder meeting: Cllr O’Broin attended on behalf of the council.
 - f. The Council thanked former Councillor O’Broin and acknowledged his valuable work concerning planning and environment during his time in office.
- 12. Reports from Local Meetings.**
- i. Minutes of the FCC Environment/Heidelberg Materials Liaison Meeting held 11 May had been circulated.
 - ii. OCC to Heidelberg Compliance Monitoring Report – 11 August 2026 – noted.
 - iii. OCC to FCC re Compliance Monitoring Inspection Sutton Courtenay Landfill – 16 July 2026 – noted.
- 14. Attendance at Local Meetings**
The next FCC /Heidelberg Materials Liaison Meeting will be held on 14 September. Cllr Shepherd can attend but will also ask village representative.
- 15. Correspondence**
Communications received had been circulated to Councillors since the last meeting. The Clerk and the Chair had received spam emails but no issues had arisen as correct procedure followed. The Clerk and Chair’s email addresses are published on the Council’s website and this was the likely reason for the targeted spam messages.
- 16. Items for information or next Agenda only**

The budgeting process will commence at the October meeting. All items for the next agenda to be submitted to the Clerk within 5 working days of the scheduled meeting.

17. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 8 October, 19.30 hrs in the Village Hall.
18. The Chair closed the meeting at 21.55 hrs.