



Minutes of the Meeting of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026 at 7.30pm in Stewart Room, Stewart Village Hall

**Present:** Cllr J Davys (Chair), Cllr J Debney, Cllr D Fisher, Cllr M Freeman, Cllr G Gilgrass, Cllr J Harding, Cllr C Hollebhone, Cllr K Sherman, Cllr R Nielsen

**In attendance:**

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr. James Barlow – OCC, Cllr. Anne-Marie Simpson - SODC
2. **Declarations of interest:** Cllr. J Debney – Planning Application P26/S0631(2)/S73
3. **Public Participation:** two participants requested to attend the meeting; 7.5minutes each person was granted.
  - This was attended by the Director of JPPC regarding the planning application P26/S0631(2)/S73; a full explanation of the application was provided to the Council with regards to some minor alterations of the plots in question.
  - A group of residents also attended regarding planning application P26/S0631(2)/S73 to provide the council with their concerns and reasons for not wanting the planning to go ahead as it stands; they feel more checks need to be taken (flood risks, access etc)
4. **Reports from District & County Council** – Both Councillors had sent apologies – Accepted. Reports were emailed over in their absence and circulated.
5. **Minutes:** to confirm Minutes of meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026 – the minutes had been circulated to all Councillors, were agreed by all, and signed and by **The Chair Cllr. James Davys**
6. **Update on progress from previous Minutes:** Chair/Clerk/Councillors
  - i) Pavillion update: **Cllr. R Nielsen:** Nothing new to report as Council systems were currently shut down from 9/4/26 – 24/4/26, also the Case Office at SODC was on annual leave until next month
  - ii) Village Hall Update: **Cllr. G Gilgrass:** There is currently no plan to replace Annette Kilworth (Trustee). Cllr. Gilgrass advised that the pop-up clothes fundraising sale had made £1800.00 last weekend. Items which were remaining were going to be listed on Vinted for further fundraising. He advised



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that there were two new people who had come on board to assist with further fundraising. Cllr. Gilgrass advised that currently the fund raising has achieved half of the £500,000.00 target.

iii) **Playground update: Cllr. G Gilgrass:** Cllr. Gilgrass advised that the pressure washing of Macney lane had taken place last weekend. The recent inspections taken last weekend had shown graffiti on the back of the climbing wall equipment; this will be jet washed when further cleaning is done next week. Update on the tennis courts was that the posts are due for pressure washing on 16/5/26 and it was also discussed regarding the post replacement (as per previous meeting) to go ahead and carry this out – Quote had been approved at £1200.00 and all Councillors unanimously agreed this can be carried out.

iv) **Charity donation guidance letter – review Cllr. J Davys:** The draft document had been circulated last month and Cllr. Davys wanted to update that he, and Cllr. K Sherman are going to adapt this letter and bring it back to May meeting.

v) Clerk updated increase in Meeting room costs from £25.00 to £28.00 per use.

Reserves Policy and Financial Regulations policy passed to Cllr. J Harding to review for May meeting.

Standing Orders for review by Cllr. R Nielsen

Advised AGAR is underway.

## **7. Finance Report:**

- The report was circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting for review.
- Cllr. J Harding produced and end of year financial report and fully explained all the figures and variances to the Councillors prior to sending off to Auditor for the AGAR
- An additional financial document was sent to all Councillors listing two late invoices for payment – approved by all.

## **8. Planning:**



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Cllr. D Fisher stated that there were no problems with the current planning applications and that all/any comments had been made on those which were necessary.

## 9. Parish Matters

a) **Surface Water Drainage** - due to Cllr James Barlow not attending the meeting this point has been pushed back to May meeting.

### b) **Hedge – Village end of Croft Path**

Two complaints had been received regarding the overhanging of a hedge at Croft Path. Cllr. K Sherman brought this to the meeting to discuss steps to resolve. Cllr. Debney commented that this has previously been raised and, the hedge in question, is the responsibility of the homeowner. **Cllr. J Davys will visit** the resident to discuss a resolution to this matter. It was also mentioned from Cllr. R Nielsen that this can be reported on FixMyStreet, **Cllr. K Sherman will do this.**

### c) **HR – Update**

Cllr. K Sherman had accepted the role of HR and had been in contact with NALC regarding Clerk's Contract. This has been renewed, as was out of date, and signed by the Clerk and The Chair at the meeting of 21/4/26. All relevant papers were provided to the Clerk. Cllr, K Sherman also made the Council aware that there needed to be a three person HR committee: Cllr, M Freeman, and Cllr. C Hollebone both accepted the role of HR Committee members.

### d) **APM Date:**

Date was unanimously agreed to be 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026 from 7-8pm before the main Parish meeting. Agenda was discussed to be set.

### d) **Four Policies reviewed:**

Debit card, Complaints Procedure, Privacy Policy, and Investments. Debit card and Complaints Procedure were both agreed to be re-adopted with no amendments. Privacy Policy and Investment Policy are currently being amended – to review at May meeting.

e) **Revisit Code of Conduct** for purposes of both new and current Councillors which they have all reviewed.

f) **Dead Elm Tree resident complaint email** – Deacons Orchard



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g) The tree was reviewed by three of the Councillors: Cllr. J Debney commented that this was not a council tree it belongs to the resident who has sent the email. **Cllr. J Debney will visit the resident** to discuss the tree. All trees, that are owned by the Council, are reviewed annually, Cllr. J Debney takes on this role under the supervision of Tom Cottrell: any work required to the trees the Parish Council obtains a quote from Tom Cottrell for the work. A quote has been submitted for £1800.00 which was unanimously agreed by all Councillors and that the work was necessary and approved the payment.

**h) Sires Hill traffic calming**

Cllr. J Barlow was not in attendance but, Cllr. C Hollebone stated that as recorded in Cllr. J Barlow's Report, the traffic calming in Sires Hill has been acknowledged and that the OCC Highways have committed it to the 26/27 Speed Management Programme. The weight limit concerns still need to be pursued by **Cllr. C Hollebone**.

**i) Email request – memory bench.**

Unfortunately, the council does not have any space for a further bench but have suggested that a tree, location to be agreed, would be an option as an alternative to a memory bench. **Cllr. J Davys will reply to the email with this information.**

- Items for information or next Agenda only
- Pavillion Update
- Village Hall Update
- Clerks Report
- Playground Update
- Internal Audit (AGAR)
- Date of next meeting **Tuesday May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 – to be APM from 7-8pm followed by Parish meeting.**

**Meeting was closed at 9.15pm**