

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
SWALLOWFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
ON TUESDAY 11TH NOVEMBER 2025 AT 7:30PM
IN THE ROSE ROOM, SWALLOWFIELD PARISH HALL, RG7 1QX

Present: Mr. J. Anderson, Mr. R. Chapman, Mrs. C. Drew, Mrs. L. Edmonds,
Mr. J. McDermott, Mrs. M. McDonald, Mrs. L. Smith, Mr. S. Taylor

In attendance: Mrs. E. Halson (Clerk)

Members of the public: 2

3115 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3116 QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

NB: This is not a verbatim account of the questions and answers, but information is provided to give a flavour of what was said.

3116.1 Resident – I would like to know the council's views on planning application 252430.

Cllr. Taylor – I will be asking the council to agree its response later in the meeting but my proposal, in summary, will be to object stating that it is inappropriate and a step too far in terms of 'tilted balance'.

Resident – what will the council do to encourage people to respond?

Cllr. Taylor – our response will be published on our website and Facebook page, this can be shared with residents.

3117 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

3117.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 14th October – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the minutes of this meeting be **APPROVED**. 5 for, 3 abstentions, motion carried. ¹

3118 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

3118.1 Autumn Litter Pick – it was **NOTED** that the event was a great success. The council would like to note its gratitude to Peter and Claire Sampson for orchestrating the day and all the residents who helped with refreshments and those who picked up all the litter. ²

¹ JA

² Clerk

3118.2 Community Carols – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the council donate £50 to the two community groups who are organising village carols in Swallowfield and Riseley to purchase mulled wine and mince pies. All in favour. ³

3119 CLERK'S UPDATE

3119.1 Hall Update – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that due to commercial sensitivities the press and public be excluded during discussion of this item in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 & Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. All in favour.

3120 PLANNING

Chairman of Planning Committee: Cllr. Taylor

3120.1 Current applications – for details see 2025 / 1366

3120.1.1	252430 – Land East of Trowes Lane, Swallowfield	Object ⁴
3120.1.2	252480 – 30 Glover Crescent, Arborfield RG2 9TS	No Comment
3120.1.3	252570 – Lancambria, Baskingstoke Road RG7 1PY	No Comment
3120.1.4	252600 – Parish Stores, The Street, Swallowfield RG7 1QY	Not yet validated

3120.2 Application for a street trading consent

3120.2.1 ST73 Altan Demirkiran (Pizzatron) – Trading site: Swallowfield Parish Hall Car Park, Wednesday 16:00-20:30 hrs. It was **AGREED** that the council had no objection to the licence being renewed.

3120.3 Street Naming, Land West of Trowes Lane – it was **AGREED** that trees would be most appropriate for road names on this development with “The Willows” as the primary name, with Hawthorn, Elm, Oak and Poplar as secondary names. It was acknowledged that it is unlikely all 5 names will be required and that the Post Office will make the final decision.

3121 FINANCE

(Budgets/investments/reserves/grants/risk assessments/insurance)

Lead Councillor: Cllr. J. Anderson

3121.1 Monthly Accounts

3121.1.1 October 2025 – it was **NOTED** that the accounts had been circulated.

3121.1.2 September 2025 – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the accounts be **APPROVED** the accounts. All in favour.

³ Clerk

⁴ Clerk to publish comments on website and FB

3121.2 2026/2027 Budget – it was **NOTED** that a draft budget is being prepared for 2026/27. Councillors should submit projects for inclusion in the year to the Clerk and copy the Lead councillor for Finance. ⁵ Cllr. Anderson reported that a forecast against budget for 2025/2026 had been circulated.

3121.3 Investments – it was **NOTED** that the Investment Manager from Charles Stanley would meet with the council for an annual review on Tuesday 9th December, 6:30pm immediately before the full council meeting. Cllr. Anderson reported that a forecast against budget for 2025/2026 had been circulated.

3122 **BILLS LIST**

3122.1 Payments Due – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the payments as listed below be **APPROVED**. On-line payments would be authorised by Cllrs. Anderson and Taylor. All in favour. ⁶

1	Deposit Refund	300.00	INV 479
2	Deposit Refund	300.00	INV 455
3	Deposit Refund	300.00	INV 478
4	Reimbursement	122.43	Litter pick Refreshments
5	Select	81.33	Waste Collection-RMH
6	Select	108.15	Waste Collection-SPH
7	Select	88.70	Waste Collection-Recreation Ground
8	Wokingham BC	180.00	Premises Licence
9	C Bell	200.00	October Classes
10	Moorepay	106.60	October Payroll
11	Somerville	717.60	Replacement glass - SPH Windows
12	Lafford & Leavey	828.00	RMH - Door
13	GLS	80.36	Cleaning Products
14	D2D Distribution	354.00	Newsletter Distribution
15	Karen Luke	234.00	October Cleaning
16	Nigel Jeffries	748.14	Grounds Maintenance - October
17	Hive	756.00	Newsletter
18	BACS Charge	17.12	Payroll
19	BT	536.58	Telephone and Broadband
20	CASTLE WATER	130.00	Water - RMH
21	CASTLE WATER	54.96	Water - SPH
22	HMRC PAYMENTS	1,096.55	Payroll
23	Lloyds Bank (Alto Card)	8.09	Repairs & Maintenance, Bank Charge

⁵ All Councillors

⁶ JA/ST

24	Payroll - October	6,850.51	Payroll
25	Go Cardless - Blucando	88.96	IT
26	Unity Trust	13.20	Bank Charges
27	Wokingham BC	122.00	Business Rates - RMH
28	Wokingham BC	88.00	Business Rates - SPH
29	SSE	266.67	Gas

3123 COUNCIL MATTERS

3123.1 IT Policy - it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the council adopt the policy circulated. All in favour. ⁷

3123.2 Website – update to WCAG 2.2 compliance.

It was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the council **APPROVED** work to be carried out on the website to make it comply with WCAG 2.2 standards at a cost of approx. £375 plus VAT. All in favour. ⁸

It was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the council adopt the draft accessibility statement circulated in the report. All in favour. ⁹

It was **NOTED** that further work may be required to convert pdfs to be compliant.

3124 ENVIRONMENT & RURAL AFFAIRS

(The Marshes/Van Demans/Swallowfield Meadow/Community/Orchard/
Biodiversity/Footpaths/Waste/NAG/RCAG)
Lead Councillor: Cllr. L. Smith

3124.1 Fields Neighbourhood Action Group – it was **NOTED** that the last meeting of the Fields NAG was held on 8th October.

3124.2 Van Demans – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the council engage Sundew Ecology to prepare a management plan and a vision for an enhanced project, draft a grant application for National Lottery Heritage Funding and apply to Natural England for LNR status. The total cost would be £2,835.39. All in favour. ¹⁰

3124.3 Swallowfield Meadow - to **CONSIDER** the quotes for fencing work around Swallowfield Meadow.

It was **PROPOSED** and seconded that due to commercial sensitivities the press and public be excluded during discussion of this item in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 & Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. All in favour.

⁷ Clerk

⁸ Clerk

⁹ Clerk

¹⁰ Clerk

3125 RESILIENCE

(Flooding/ditches/rivers/ Flood Resilience Group 'FRG')

Lead Councillor: Cllr. M. McDonald

- 3125.1 FRG – it was **NOTED** that there will be a meeting of the Flood Resilience Group on Wednesday 26th November at 7:30pm in the Rose Room.

3126 HALLS

(Maintenance/website/involvement with users/Marketing and Entertainment Groups)

Lead Councillor: Cllr. M. McDonald

- 3126.1 Halls User Group Meeting – it was **NOTED** that Cllr. McDonald had invited members of key community groups to meet to discuss hall usage. She would work with the Caretaker and Halls Booking Clerk to implement suggestions which include updating the Conditions of Hire. ¹¹
- 3126.2 Hall Inspection – it is **PROPOSED** and seconded that with immediate effect the Caretaker be asked to attend Swallowfield Parish Hall at an appropriate time following such events to inspect the hall and photograph and record any issues. Hall users would be made aware that if the hall is not left in an acceptable state charges will be taken from their deposit. The caretaker will be paid at an appropriate rate depending on the timing of the visit. All in favour. ¹²

3127 HR

(Appraisals/recruitment/staff training)

Lead Councillor: Cllr. C. Drew

- 3127.1 2025 Salary Review – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that due to personal sensitivities the press and public be excluded during discussion of this item in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 & Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. All in favour.
- 3127.2 Staff Training – it was **NOTED** that the caretaker had completed a series of Health and Safety Courses.

3128 RECREATION

(Play areas/skateboard park/recreation grounds/football pitches/mpg court)

Lead Councillor: Cllr. S. Taylor

- 3128.1 SPAA – it was **NOTED** that the minutes of the September Committee meeting had been received.

¹¹ MM

¹² Clerk / MM

3129 CORRESPONDENCE

- 3129.1 Calico Trust – it was **NOTED** that a query about insurance of the allotment site had been received. It was **NOTED** that the query had been passed to the council's insurance broker.
- 3129.2 Link Visiting Scheme – it was **NOTED** that a grant request had been received.

3130 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- 3130.1 Replacement of fencing around Swallowfield Recreation Ground
- 3130.2 Hearing Loop, Swallowfield Parish Hall

3131 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 3131.1 Tuesday 9th December 2025 at 7.30 p.m. in the Rose Room, Swallowfield Parish Hall, Swallowfield Street, Swallowfield.

Due to commercial sensitivities and personal data, the press and public were excluded during discussion of the following items in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 & Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

3132 HALLS

- 3132.1 Hall Update, Atrium Roof – it was **NOTED** that the contractor and builder had visited several times to investigate the issues. A report had been prepared for review by the builder and architect. It was **NOTED** that the architect may issue a certificate for additional work carried out i.e. work surface and fire door prior to the completion certificate.

3133 HR

- 3133.1 2025 HR Salary Review – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the pay review for April 2025 proposed by the National Joint council be approved for all employees with immediate effect, and that this award be back dated to 1st April 2025. All in favour. ¹³

¹³ CD / Clerk / RFO

3134 ENVIRONMENT

- 3134.1 Swallowfield Meadow – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the council engage SCS Landscape Management to carry out the work specified (repair of knee rail), with the following addition, installation of strimmer protectors on all the posts of the knee rail, even those which are not being replaced. It was **AGREED** that the decision on whether to install wooden or galvanised gates be delegated to the Clerk following consultation with Cllrs. Smith and Taylor. The cost would be £6,296 plus VAT with up to 10% allowance for the additional work. All in favour. ¹⁴

[The meeting closed at 9:15pm]

¹⁴ Clerk / LS/ ST

Appendix A

3120 PLANNING

3120.1 Current Applications

Agenda Ref	App No	Type	Address	Application
3120.1.1	252430	Outline	Land East of Trowes Lane Swallowfield	<p>Outline application for the proposed development of up to 79 dwellings together with access, landscaping and associated infrastructure. (All matters reserved except for means of access.)</p> <p>Cllr. Taylor explained that he would propose that the council object to this application for the reasons in his circulated paper, however, he explained that if this application were to be approved by WBC or on appeal it was important for the council to document what conditions and contributions it would like to see in the negotiations for developer contributions.</p> <p>It was PROPOSED and seconded that the council object to this application but state what conditions it would like to see. All in favour. See page 2025 / 1366 for details.</p>
3120.1.2	252285	Householder	34 Glover Crescent Arborfield RG2 9TS	<p>Householder application for the proposed installation of two roof lights to the front roof slope and one roof light to the rear roof slope to facilitate a loft conversion.</p> <p>It was PROPOSED and seconded that the council would not comment on this application. All in favour.</p>
3120.1.3	252570	Certificate of Lawfulness	Lancambria Basingstoke Road RG7 1PY	<p>Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed insertion of 2 no. first floor windows to the south elevation of the dwelling, plus erection of 2 no. single storey outbuildings.</p> <p>It was PROPOSED and seconded that the council would not comment on this application. All in favour.</p>

Agenda Ref	App No	Type	Address	Application
3120.1.4	252600	Full Application	Parish Stores The Street Swallowfield RG7 1QY	Full application for the proposed installation of refrigeration condenser unit and acoustic cabinet on the front elevation of the building. Cllr. Taylor explained that this application had been submitted by the parish council but had not yet been validated by WBC.

Application 252430: East of Trowes Lane. City and Country

Swallowfield Parish Council strongly objects to this application.

The reasons as to why this application is inappropriate have been well documented in objections to the two previous sadly approved applications on Trowes Lane, namely:

181130 and 202845: Cove Homes
230422: Croudace

In particular the Croudace application, which was approved on appeal following a fully justified refusal by Wokingham Borough Council, exhibits all the disqualifying factors that must also be taken into account when considering this new application. To quote the Conclusion of the planning inspector:

“The development would conflict with policies relating to the location of new development, protection of the landscape, and accessibility to facilities and services. It would therefore conflict with the development plan as a whole.” The same comments apply here.

The inspector then went on to apply a tilted balance as per NPPF paragraph 11d. We believe that the application of tilted balance was flawed in the Croudace case, and it would be even more flawed to apply it to this new application as compounding the unsustainability already increased by previous approvals.

It is not sensible or right to claim that a development is sustainable when:

- It is not in catchment for any primary or secondary schools: children are assigned to a wide range of schools with no coherent plan to bolster the community of Swallowfield Parish.
- It has rudimentary public transport (the applicant states there are on average four buses per hour: this is untrue. At best we have one bus an hour, and that only to Reading). There is no public transport to Wokingham itself. It is ridiculous to suggest that commuting residents or school children should cycle several miles in the dark on unlit roads with no pavements to reach necessary destinations (schools, stations or place of work). We ask planners, councillors and/or inspectors “would you be happy for your loved ones to do this?”
- Residents who commute by train will drive to stations. Parking at local stations is already totally inadequate, with cars parked along roads restricting other traffic.
- Its medical service is heavily overloaded and unable to fully meet the needs of its current patients
- It has only a small convenience store
- The village sewage system is already inadequate, with regular overloads, and pumping tankers used at the main pumping station by the village hall for many days each year. It is unlikely that Thames Water will upgrade this in the near or medium future.
- Traffic is already such that the access to major road networks (the A33) is gridlocked at commuting times
- The residents in “affordable” housing will, like all other residents, need cars to go about their daily business.

Flood risk: whatever the EA flood maps show, the site is soggy. Surface water is likely to be a problem. In fact, the applicant’s own flood risk assessment suggests a medium to high risk of flooding up to 0.2m to the site access. An analysis of the applicant’s flood assessment has

been posted as a comment by Graham Stanley, chair of the Swallowfield Flood Resilience Group, and we urge WBC/inspectors to give careful consideration to his findings.

IF, despite the obvious unsuitability of this scheme, planners do decide to approve, either through WBC process or appeal, we request that, among other conditions, the developer should:

- Contribute towards continuation of and improvement of the bus service
- Provide funds to the PC for improvements to the main village playground rather than wild play equipment in the onsite woods (as we all know such stuff will decay, leaving costs of repair or maintenance to the residents).