

## MINAL PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Held on 10 March 2025 At 6.45pm in the Village Hall

Draft for approval on 12 May 2025

**1. Present:**

Anna Whitehead, Chair  
Brian Devonshire, Vice Deputy Chair  
Rob Bailey, Vice Deputy Chair  
Guy Gagen  
Lucy Kirkpatrick  
Lesley Rowe

**Apologies Accepted from:**

Adam Kebble

**In Attendance**

Sue Hine, Clerk/RFO  
Caroline Thomas, County Councillor

**Declarations of Interest for Matters being discussed:** None.

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2025**

The Minutes were approved and were signed.

**3. Matters Arising –** These had been circulated and an updated Action sheet accompanies these minutes. The main actions have been transferred to Agenda items.

**4. Questions from Members of the Public:** None

**5. Weight Limits for Werg and Stitchcombe Bridges**

During the Barn Street closure a large Culina lorry had entered the Werg, travelled over the historic bridge and ultimately got stuck going up Cockatroop Lane. The rescue operation took several hours and the driver had advised residents affected that had there been a weight limit on the bridge he would not have taken the short cut back to the A4. This is despite there being a “single track road sign” off the High Street. Highways Officer Martin Cook is sending out someone to inspect the bridge and Councillors approved a motion from Brian Devonshire that we apply to WCC for weight limits for Werg and Stitchcombe bridges. Lesley Rowe is going to investigate whether there is a current limit. Clerk will chase up Martin Cook and check that the process is to apply through LHFIG. **Action: Clerk, LR, AW**

**6. Historic Barn on Gale Property**

Rob Bailey reported that there has been further storm damage to the barn and the structure is falling apart. The background is that planning application 16/10809/LBC for a steel roof was refused and since then the Gale family have done nothing to improve the condition of the barn and this historic building will soon be lost. The barn is on private land and it appears that there is little risk to the public. County Councillor Caroline Thomas suggested writing to the planning department and enforcement team to ask if the building is listed and whether there is any obligation for the land owner and whether any enforcement action be taken to protect this historic barn. **Action: Clerk**

## 7. Kingfisher Cottage

Brian Devonshire then asked if Lesley Rowe had heard anything from the Land Registry about Kingfisher Cottage. This was lodged in September 2024. Subsequent to the meeting Lesley contacted the Land Registry who suggested Practice Guide 4 – Adverse Possession. AW said that this is not practical for our case. Increasingly Empty Homes Officers are employed by Councils and she will contact WCC Housing Team. **Action: AW**

## 8. Footpaths and Bridleways

Mr Bull has failed to answer two letters requesting permission to enter his land to cut footpath MIL 25. LR will now request that Stephen Leonard's team cut this path. They are aware of Mr Bull's actions in the past. **Action: LR**

The Clerk said that the final consultation for the Modification Order 2022 for Kings Drive Ramsbury 9B, 44, 71 & 72 and Mildenhall 16 was now live and an order would be made shortly.

Rob Bailey reported that Matt Cichero, Helen and Adam Slater and Jon Napper had cleared the mud off the path by Minal House leading to Marlborough and Councillors thanked them for their efforts. Caroline Thomas said that the Parish Steward could undertake this work and this will be added to the list.

## 9. Waste Collection

The contract for waste collection expires at the end of March. The Clerk presented an alternative quote from Tactical Facilities Management. Councillors asked the Clerk to contact Hungerford Town Council for a reference and will consider in May. **Action: Clerk**

## 10. VE Day 8 May 2025

The Clerk reported that the British Legion have produced lamp post signs to celebrate VE Day. The village has not arranged any special event at this point. Councillors approved the purchase of 3 sets of four lamppost signs. **Action: Clerk. RB and LR to put the signs on appropriate lamp posts at either end of the village.**

## 11. Speeding Signs Thicketts Road

AW explained to Councillors that the process for reducing the speed limit to 20 mph from 30mph would cost approx £10,000 and Councillors agreed that this is too expensive when other options might be considered such as a movable SID. The Clerk gave a flyer about Elan SID's to AW and if the PC were to go ahead there are various procedures to follow.

GG noted that Google sat nav showed a 20mph limit for Thicketts road.

## 12. Local Council Elections 1 May 2025

All Councillors have agreed to stand for another 4 year term. The Clerk has written a short article for Minal News explaining the process and asking for anyone interested to come forward. The Notice of Election is live on 11 March and the Clerk will add to the website with full details of how to apply and put a paper copy on the notice board. The Clerk circulated a pack of nomination forms for Councillors to complete and **return to AW by Friday 21 May**. The Clerk will present the forms in person at the Council offices in Chippenham on Wednesday 26 May.

Caroline Thomas confirmed that she is intending to stand again to serve a further term. Councillors expressed their thanks for all her help and advice and look forward to working with her in future. **Action: AW, AK, LR**

### **13. Revised Financial Regulations – Approval, Review of Risk Assessment and Asset Register**

The Clerk and AW had worked on the new model Financial Regulations from NALC and made some adjustments to reflect the day to day working of the Council. The Risk Register has also been updated but there were no updates to the Asset Register. Councillors approved the new Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment and noted the Asset Register.

### **14. Financial Statements and Expenditure Against Budget**

The Financial Statements and Expenditure against Budget were approved by Councillors and were signed by GG. The balances were inspected on the Lloyds app and there was a minor increase in the balances of the daily interest account due to interest payments since the statements were compiled.

The fixed term interest account for the designated funds (LHFIG has matured and the Clerk has opened a further account to August 2025 paying 2.81% which was the best rate.

The Clerk said that setting up the payroll to pay NI is likely to take some time with HMRC as the previous RFO had not given the Access codes. In the first instance the Clerk will call HMRC to advise them of this and will probably need to provide written evidence to access the Government Gateway and Accounts Office Reference.

The Chair stated that the Budget for 2025-26 will need to be amended to reflect the NI payable.

Councillor Rob Bailey reported to Councillors that the village hall committee had received quotes for refurbishing the kitchen and considered new cabinets. The preferred option was to replace doors and worktops using the existing cabinets that are quite strong. RB said that it is hoped a new, brighter kitchen would encourage more local social bookings which have been lacking since the pandemic. As the costs have increased RB proposed to Councillors an increase in donation to £2,500 from the £1,000 approved in January. This was seconded by Brian Devonshire and approved by Councillors.

**Action: Clerk**

### **15. LHFIG Update**

LK reported that two environmental surveys had been carried out and they noted that specific plans are now awaited from Steve Hind.

### **16. Area Board**

Rob Bailey reported that Jon Napper had attended the Area Board on 11 February and the village hall have been awarded a grant of £5000 towards the refurbishment of the kitchen. Next meeting is May.

### **17. Any Other Business**

The Clerk has reported that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is currently out for consultation. The Clerk had also circulated a flyer about reporting non-native invasive species namely Himalyan Balsam, and Giant Hogweed. There is a village meeting with ARK Action for the River Kennet about looking after the river and Milly Carmichael will talk about this then.

The Clerk attended a Cyber crime session run by the Bobby Van Trust. More practical sessions can be run in communities but it was felt Mildenhall was too small so the Clerk will send details to Caroline Thomas for Marlborough. Beating of the Bounds is Saturday 10 May. Details to follow.

**Meeting closed at 9.05 pm**

**Dates of Next Meeting**

**Tuesday 13 May AGM and PC Meeting**