

## **MINAL PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Held on 8 September 2025 At 6.45pm in the Village Hall**

**Draft for approval on 10 November 2025**

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| <b>1. Present:</b><br>Anna Whitehead, Chair<br>Guy Gagen<br>Lesley Rowe<br>Adam Kebble<br>Lucy Kirkpatrick | <b>Apologies Accepted from:</b><br>Rob Bailey<br><br><b>In Attendance</b><br>Sue Hine, Clerk/RFO |
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**Declarations of Interest for Matters being discussed:** None.

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 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:**

On the August bank holiday weekend Mary Gale contacted John Bevan (former Chair) with concerns that the sheep in Church field had no water during the hot weather. It appeared that the owner had gone away and put the water in a horsebox which she was using to encourage the sheep to get into as she is moving them to Chris Musgrave's wild flower field. Chris Musgrave topped up the water and the sheep will be moved to graze his field and then back to the church. Councillors agreed that the relationship with Amanda Palmer was going well.

**5. Church Hedge**

The Clerk had prepared a summary for Councillors which she gave out. The Clerk had rung all the local gardening services companies in the directory and some pest controllers. Most gardening services companies do not offer box blight treatment. Chris Sheldon has provided a quote and George from Elite gardens has also viewed the hedge twice. The box is in a very poor condition. This was first pointed out by Phil Hawkins two years ago. Elite think that the main problem is box caterpillar as it is prevalent this year. Costs for twice monthly spraying are circa £200 per month and this would need to be done for 6-9 months. The treatment is only a preventative and there would need to be follow up spraying on a regular basis. The high cost is due to labour mixing the chemicals and time taken spraying the large 45-50m hedge. Councillors expressed concern about the chemicals in the vicinity and discussions turned to replacement of the hedge with a more resistant plant. Many people and organisations are planting with alternatives such as pittosporum and yew. Both contractors have suggested alternative planting and some costings have been provided by Elite. Councillors approved the quote. Chair AW will liaise with the church

PCC and the neighbour JL whose hedge is also being affected regarding action to be taken. The Clerk will obtain quotes for alternative plants. Councillors approved supporting the church with the costs with Councillor LR suggesting the PC pay for the removal and planting and the Church pays for new plants. **Action: Clerk and AW**

## 6. Footpaths and Bridleways

Lesley Rowe has continued to liaise with Rights of Way Officer, Stephen Leonard and Kymee Cleasby our new County Councillor. SL has cut the Mil 25 footpath himself. As the PC have taken all steps possible to contact Mr Bull Stephen SL has said that his team will take on responsibility for cutting the path twice a year.

Guy Gagen noted that the Aster housing path has been cut although this may have been the new resident to the adjoining property.

The Clerk reported that Mildenhall 16 is now formally upgraded to a restricted byway and the Planning have provided a large map of the parish and all footpaths and bridleways. The Clerk provided two quotes for framing this but Councillors decided to defer to November as Councillor, Rob Bailey, Chair of the Village Hall Committee was not present.

## 7. WCAG 2.2 AA Website Content Accessibility Guidelines and SAPP Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Assertion 10

The Clerk reported that from 2025 new regulations regarding, IT policy, website content, record keeping and use of official website domain emails come into effect. The PC has already moved to a gov.uk domain and Councillors are using gov.uk emails. Netwise have provided tips for the Clerk when uploading content.

## 8. IT Policy for adoption by Councillors

As part of the above all parish councils are required to have an IT policy. Councillors approved the policy drafted by the Clerk using Netwise's template and AW signed this.

## 9. Bin Contract with Tactical Facilities

There are problems emptying the Church Lane bin which have been reported on a couple of occasions by Rob Bailey and John Bevan. This bin is off the road and requires the contractor to drive up a small lane. The Clerk has provided pictures, descriptions and the what 3 words location of the bins to Tactical and the issue appears to be when Tactical are using a new contractor. The bin was emptied that weekend by the owner of Tactical which was good service. Rob Bailey will monitor the bin to and report any problems to the Clerk. The Clerk noted that financial invoicing was much more efficient than with Idverde. **Action: RB and Clerk**

## 10. Playground Inspector and Chippings

The Clerk has found a new playground inspector, Alan Dymond who has experience with Sutcliffe equipment and worked with John Clark our previous inspector. He will inspect the playground in October. The Clerk asked Guy Gagen if new chippings were required at this point. GG recommended raking at the moment. GG thanked relatives of Lesley Rowe who had helped with laying the logs in the playground and commented that this was the first time anyone had offered to help when passing. GG said that the hedges needed cutting and the Clerk will ask Chris Sheldon to undertake this. Councillor Adam Kebble suggested a day to treat the wood and Saturday 4 October at

10.00am was approved. The Clerk will try and put this in Minal news and will ask for volunteers on Minal Facebook page. **Action: Clerk**

### 11. Emergency Plan

AW reported that the dead tree adjacent to the C6 main road into the village is on Sarah Seaman's land. SS replied to AW's letter asking for it to be removed and has stated that it is in their Autumn tree maintenance programme. There is another dead tree on the Lloyd's land which AW has reported to Mr Lloyd. GG is progressing the snow plough attachment.

### 12. Financial Statements and Expenditure Against Budget

Financial Statements and Expenditure against Budget were approved by Councillors and were signed by LK who checked the balances on the Lloyds app. The Clerk reported that PKK have approved the PC's Certificate of Exemption and that there are no issues with the PC's AGAR. AW asked the Clerk to separate the column for Employers NI and Employers tax on the Expenditure Against Budget. **Action: Clerk**

### 13. New Fixed Term Account

The Clerk has opened a new Fixed Term account for 1 year for the LHFIG designated funds. The Clerk will open a new fixed term account for the funds that were previously in the 32 day notice account. **Action: Clerk**

### 14. LHFIG Update

Lucy Kirkpatrick reported that trial trenches have been dug but the gas main was not located. A drainage solution for the path is being progressed.

### 15. Any Other Business

**15.1 Signs for Playground Cars** GG reported issues with cars being parked in the playground car park for long periods and by people not visiting the playground. There is a sign stating that the car park is for use of playground users and there was some discussion about a more strongly worded sign and whether any penalties could be introduced as this is PC land. It was agreed that the Clerk would design a sign to be placed on windscreens requesting the car be moved and reminding that this is private land. **Action: Clerk**

**15.2 Anti Social behaviour at swimming sites** LR reported that the swimming areas in Stitchcombe and Axford have experienced anti-social behaviour this summer. The wild swimming spots were advertised on social media and this has resulted in visitors from as far afield as Bristol. The water is not safe as Thames water discharge into the river. LR said that it is likely the landowner will fence off this land as it is privately owned. She asked that Councillors report to her any social media posts they see. **Action: All**

**15.3 PL/2025/06978 Certificate of Lawfulness** The Clerk has received a planning application for a certificate of lawfulness for the cabin at Poulton Farm. PL/2025/06978. There has been a cabin here for farm worker accommodation and tourism since 2003 and permission expired in 2014 when WCC should have reviewed this. Councillors voted no objection and the Clerk will update the planning portal. **Action: Clerk**

**Meeting closed at 8.15 pm**

**Dates of Next Meetings** Monday 10 November 2025, Monday 12 January 2026