



VERNHAM DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Cllr John Hale

Clerk: Laura Priestley-Cooper

Tel: 07841157214

email: clerk@vernhamdean-pc.gov.uk

Website: www.vernhamdean-pc.gov.uk

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 9th March 2026 at 7.30pm, held at the Millennium Hall, Vernham Dean.

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Councillors present:

Cllr John Hale (Chairman)

Cllr Glenn Tollett

Cllr Julie Drury (Vice Chairman)

Cllr Haydn Watkins

Cllr Nigel Palmer

Cllr David Christy

Clerk

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 63.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Adrian Butt, Glynn Seymour, Borough Councillor Phil North.

Cllr Hale thanked Miriam Edwards for all her hard work as VDPC Clerk over the last 3 years. Miriam was presented with gifts as a thank you and appreciation of her work. Cllr Hale welcomed Laura Priestley-Cooper as the new VDPC Clerk.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 64.1 Cllr Drury declared a declaration of interest in relation to the Pippins planning application. Cllr Christy declared a declaration of interested in relation to the grass cutting contract quotes.

65. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 65.1 Councillors agreed and approved the minutes of the parish council meeting which was held on 12th January 2026, and which were signed by the Chairman.

66. ACTIONS ARISING

- 66.1 Footpath from Hen Barn Corner, Upton to Upton Manor – the path is currently passable but will prove impassible as the summer growth starts. Three landowners identified. Cllr Palmer advised landowners were identified and no further action taken.
- 66.2 Footpath 2 (Vernham Street by Fowlers Farm) and the replacement of three stiles with gates. Cllr Drury had spoken to the owner of Fowlers Farm, whose preference was to leave it as it was but if funding was available, they would prefer wooden kissing gates and to have further conversation with the Parish Council about the project. CIL money could possibly be available. Cllr Watkins advised he met with the Clerk and highlighted that there are 10/11 remaining stiles that could be replaced. **Action: Cllr Hale to send the Clerk a funding contact. The Clerk will meet with the new ranger with HBT Clerk to discuss opportunities.**
- 66.3 Cllr Palmer updated that the empty Crown PH at Upton was finally up for sale with the freehold being sold for £525,000. No change of use had been submitted to the planning authority. The village was considering approaching the estate agents to register interest in the building and there had been a rumour that someone was

Vernham Dean Parish Council Minutes - May 2025 to April 2026

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Signed

Date



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interested in keeping it as a pub. Cllr Palmer was asked to find out from the village regarding it being registered as a community asset which the Parish Council would support, although could not be involved. Cllr Palmer advised that two villagers met to try and move it forwards but it has been decided that there is too much financial investment needed to make it viable as a community asset. **Action: Cllr Palmer will contact the agents in the meantime about keeping it presentable.**

66.4 Cllr Drury updated that Flowers Farm was still up for sale and the thatched barn was still in the same poor state. Someone living in it but no update. **Action: Cllr Hale advised that the Parish Council will keep monitoring the situation. Cllr Kirsty North will chase the council as it is listed.**

66.5 Cllr Christy updated that during the recent spell of snow and very frosty weather, the valley road from Vernham through to Hurstbourne Tarrant had not been gritted. He had reported to HCC that it had always been done in the past, and the stretch from Hurstbourne Tarrant to St Mary Bourne had been gritted. The response was that Vernham was a Priority 2, and they were only focussing on Priority 1 routes with various criteria. Vernham Dean had indeed hit two of the criteria including that it is directly connected with another county (Wiltshire) which does grit. The village was gritted as a result, but it wasn't continued down the road to Upton. Cllr Hale to speak to Cllr Kirsty North regarding priority for an isolated village. Cllr Hale advised that the Parish don't qualify for priority 1 gritting as we have less than 500 residents, the Parish qualify for priority 2.

67. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

67.1 There were 3 members of the public at the meeting.

67.2 Mrs M Edwards advised that the materials needed for the notice board in Upton have been ordered supplies and the boards will be put back up again.

68. PLANNING

68.1 26/00463/FULLN Pippins – 2 storey development. **The Clerk will circulate the planning application for comments. Afternote: Comments have been received and will be collated and submitted as comments to Test Valley planning.**

26/00409/TREEN T1 - Leylandii - Fell. T2 - Hornbeam - Crown reduce by up to 2m. The George Inn High Street. – no objections were made.

26/00322/TREEN - Removal of Crab apple tree- Vine Cottage Back Lane- No objections were made.

25/02031/LBWN - Retention of replacement timber windows with wood effect UPVC windows – Church Cottage Vernham Street -Appeal Status- Appeal Lodged and rejected by Test Valley Borough Council.

69. COUNCILLORS' UPDATES

69.1 Cllr Tollett now has all the equipment needed to line the containers. It was noted that the containers will need the contents removed out of the pavilion for the work to be completed. **Action: Clerk will put on May agenda to organise a day.**



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- 69.2 Cllr Christy reported that the hedges up on Bullpits Hill have been cut and speed sign has been knocked down. **Action: Cllr Christy will report it online.** Cllr Kirsty North advised there is an app for phone for reporting them.
- 69.3 Cllr Christy suggested that the Parish Council invest in some permanent speed indicators – one at each end of the village. It was noted that they would have to be at 30mph so they couldn't be changed to 20mph. Cllr Hale suggested as part of annual meeting the council could see what engagement there is for the 20mph and then decide. **Action: Cllr Christy and Clerk will investigate speed indicators costs and report back.**
- 69.4 Cllr Drury reported that most potholes on Bowers Lane are now fixed. Cllr Drury advised that there is a tree that looks like it will fall on Bowers Lane on the left-hand side, Cllr Hale advised of the same problem with a dead ash tree on right hand side out towards Upton. **Action: Cllr Drury to put on a map for Cllr Hale**
- 69.5 Cllr Drury advised that the triangle at Upton has a very dangerous deep pothole. Cllr Hale advised it has been reported already. **Action: Cllr Kirsty North to follow up. Cllr Drury will report the other dangerous stretch of road towards Buttermere.**
- 69.6 Cllr Watkins advised that Footpath 3 (top of Bulpits Hill) is not passable. Owners wanted to have footpath re directed around the edge of the field. **Action: Cllr Watkins is yet to make contact with the owners to discuss this further and will try again.**
- 69.7 Cllr Watkins wanted to check the current social housing situation after seeing another of the bungalows being sold by Aster. Cllr Hale advised that there are 3 left owned by Aster. Cllr Kirsty North advised that English Rural would be the best route to find housing within the parish. Cllr Kirsty North can ask for a housing needs survey to be conducted should the Parish need one.
- 69.8 Cllr Palmer advised the official Upton litter pick which stretches to Bury Deane car park is taking place this Saturday 14th March.
- 69.9 Cllr Hale reported that Test Valley Council have said they can put a 3rd bottle bank in due to the overflowing problem. **Action: It was decided to monitor the situation over the next couple of months. If full each time an additional one will be ordered.**
- 70.0 Cllr Hale advised that a survey for 20mph speed limit will be going as part of the advertising for the Annual Parish Assembly.
- 70.1 Cllr Hale advised that the road edges will be dealt with by Conholt Estate when the weather dries up. Cllr Kirsty North advised that the plan will be to restore the verges with re seeding and that it was suggested that some strategic passing places were put in. Cllr Kirsty North reported that the council are waiting for Conholt Estate to confirm that they are finished with lorry movements before the council do any further pothole repairs.
- 70.2 Cllr Hale advised that he is happy to endorse any funding requests to Conholt Estate for the village.
- 70.3 Cllr Hale reported that the Fete is establishing a good structure and the plans are developing well.
- 70.4 Cllr Christy reported that there is and has been in the past, road closure signs left on side of the road. Cllr Kirsty North advised there is an option to report that on the app.
- 70.5 Cllr Hale advised that the Grass Cutting Quotes have been received. One from Scofell and the other from Groundtec. It was noted that Groundtec were considerably more expensive and it was agreed to reappoint Scofell for 2026/27. **Action: Clerk will confirm the contract with Scofell.**



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71. CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

71.1 Really detailed handover with the previous Clerk has been conducted with some additional support still in place for the audit and year end. The Clerk has completed an Introduction to finance training session with HALC.

72. ASSET REGISTER

72.1 The Asset Register was reviewed, and it was noted that the new benches at the park were to be added on. Also to add was the Clerks new Laptop. Cllr Hale advised that the 6 marquees need putting on. Cllr Hale noted that the prices are currently 2024 prices and the RPI rates will need to be checked. **Action: Clerk to investigate this and amend accordingly.**

73. FINANCE

73.1 On the day of the meeting, the bank balances stood at £46,021.02 with reserves of £44,475.25

73.2 The clerk had circulated the payments made since the last meeting. Cllr Hale agreed them as an accurate record.

TYPE	DATE	PAYEE	AMOUNT	REMARKS
BACS	2/1/256	SSE	59.53	Pavilion Electricity
BACS	12/1/26	Kelly Lowth	32.00	Pavilion Cleaning 10.1
BACS	12/1/26	Tangley PC	159.54	SLR quarterly maintenance
BACS	12/1/26	Mrs M Edwards	256.70	Salary
BACS	12/1/26	Charles Moody	140.00	PAT testing Pavilion
BACS	22/1/26	Mrs Miriam Edwards	384.00	Defibrillator battery
BACS	28/1/26	HMRC	64.40	PAYE
BACS	28/1/26	Starboard Systems	446.40	Scribe accounting package
BACS	30/1/26	Mrs Miriam Edwards	736.98	New clerk's laptop
BACS	5/2/26	SSE	50.64	Pavilion electricity
BACS	19/2/26	SSE	54.81	Pavilion electricity
BACS	19/2/26	VDPFA	51.00	Transfer of funds to cover charges
BACS	19/2/26	David Holmes	20.00	Poppy wreath



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BACS	19/2/26	Glenn Tollett	152.30	Pavilion container insulation
BACS	20/2/26	Business Stream	48.24	Pavilion water rates
BACS	26/2/26	Ms L Morgan	359.74	Clerk's salary
BACS	26/2/26	Miriam Edwards	256.90	Clerk's salary
BACS	26/2/26	HMRC	158.88	PAYE
BACS	26/2/26	Mrs Miriam Edwards	5.54	Postage fees
BACS	5/3/26	Mrs Miriam Edwards	18.98	Memory stick for new clerk
BACS	5/3/26	VD Village Hall	225.00	Hall hire 2026
BACS	5/3/26	HALC	64.20	New clerk online training
BACS	5/3/26	Ms L Morgan	539.34	Clerk's salary

74. NEXT MEETING

74.1 The next meeting of the Parish Council would be the Annual Parish Council Meeting on Monday 18th May 2026.

The meeting concluded at 20:40 hrs.

Signed Chairman