

UNADOPTED

GROVE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5 MAY 2026

Present: Cllr S K Dexter (Chairman – Item 1 only) Cllr D Rolfe
Cllr W R Ackers (Chairman from Item 2) Cllr K Rowland (part meeting)
Cllr R Batstone Cllr G Smeddle
Cllr M Charlton Cllr J M Stock
Cllr A P Harker Cllr A Stoter
Cllr F D Parnell

In attendance: Mr R G Watson (GPC RFO) and one member of the public

Clerk: Mr G M Mundy

Prior to the start of the meeting the Vice-Chairman informed the Council that Chris McCarthy had stood down as Chairman and from the Parish Council altogether. He added that he would Chair the meeting until a new Chairman is elected

1 Election of the Council Chairman for the municipal year 2026-2027

The Chairman asked if there were any nominations for Chairman and asked if those nominated were willing to stand.

Cllr Parnell nominated Cllr Ackers – Cllr Ackers confirmed he was willing to stand, Cllr Stock seconded the motion. The Chairman asked if there were any more nominations. Cllr Smeddle nominated Cllr Rolfe – Cllr Rolfe confirmed that he was willing to stand, Cllr Dexter seconded the motion.

The Chairman then asked for both nominees in turn to state their pitch, following which, the Chairman then asked for a show of hands in support of each nomination and the vote was as follows: 7 in favour of Cllr Ackers and 4 in favour of Cllr Rolfe.

Therefore, it was **MOVED** Cllr Parnell **SECONDED** Cllr Stock and **RESOLVED** 7 in favour and 4 abstentions

“that Cllr Ackers is elected as the Council Chairman for the 2026-27 municipal year”

2 Receive Council Chairman’s Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The newly elected Chairman duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was witnessed by Mr G M Mundy, Proper Officer of the Council.

3 Election of the Council Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2026-2027

The Chairman asked if there were any nominations for Vice-Chairman and asked if those nominated were willing to stand.

Cllr Parnell nominated Cllr Rolfe – Cllr Rolfe confirmed he was willing to stand, Cllr Charlton seconded the motion. The Chairman asked if there were any more nominations. Cllr Smeddle nominated Cllr Dexter – Cllr Dexter confirmed that he was willing to stand, Cllr Rowland seconded the motion.

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The Chairman then asked Cllr Dexter to state his pitch, following which, the Chairman then asked for a show of hands in support of each nomination and the vote was as follows: 7 in favour of Cllr Dexter and 4 in favour of Cllr Rolfe.

Therefore, it was **MOVED** Cllr Smeddle **SECONDED** Cllr Rowland and **RESOLVED** 7 in favour and 4 abstentions

“that Cllr Dexter is elected as the Council’s Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2026-27”

Cllr Rowland asked if there was a mechanism whereby a would-be Chairman and or Vice-Chairman could shadow the incumbent Chairman. She said that whilst she did not vote for Cllr Rolfe in this election, she said he would make an excellent Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

Clerk The Clerk responded and said that he was not aware of any mechanism but would ask the question to the Clerks forum.

4 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Parish Cllr K Jones, J Leggott and B Magin.

5 Declaration of Personal or Pecuniary Interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting

No declarations were given at this time.

6 Sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 7 April 2026

It was **MOVED** the Chairman and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the minutes be signed as a true record of the meeting”

7 Clerk’s summary report from the previous meeting(s)

- (a) Minute 164(a) – Asset of Community Value (ACV). The Clerk informed the Council that he has now started the process of completing this action and will bring forward to Council in the new Municipal Year.
- (b) Minute 164(b) – Investments. The Clerk informed the Council that due to other commitments and annual leave this matter has not been progressed. However, he informed the Council that this matter has now been handed over to the newly appointed RFO for action in the coming months.
- (c) Minute 164(c) – Millbrook Square CCTV. The Clerk informed the Council that he is waiting for a quote following a site meeting on 9 April 2026.
- (d) Minute 164(g) – Grove Extravaganza. The Clerk informed the Council that he will draw up a list in the coming weeks once he has ascertained which members will be available.
- (e) Minute 168 – Correspondence from Paul Gander. The Clerk informed the Council that Mr Gander had informed him that Priem is the managing agent for the Kingsgrove Community (Estate management) and Cratus are the agency used by Brighton St Modwen (the main developer) for communication and PR.
- (f) Minute 169 – Rhino Security quote. The Clerk informed the Council that Rhino Security will install the new bollards on 14 May 2026.

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- (g) Minute 171 – Acceptance of terms for s106 application for 3G ATP sports training pitch. The Clerk informed the Council that he has notified the District Council of this Council's decision.
- (h) Minute 172(a – f) – Interim Internal Audit observations and responses. The Clerk informed the Council that he has notified the Internal Auditor of the Council's decisions and responded to him with amended responses.
- (i) Minute 173 – Support for an application for s106 funding from Grove Challengers FC. The Clerk informed the Council that he has informed the District Council of this Council's decision in this regard.
- (j) Minute 176(b) – Extension of leave of absence. The Clerk informed the Council that Cllr Maginn has been informed the Council's decision in this regard.
- (k) Minutes 179(a) – Briefing Paper – staff matters. The Clerk informed the Council that a Staffing Sub-committee meeting was held on Tuesday 21 April 2026. Matters from this meeting will be discussed under item 18 on the agenda for this meeting.

8 Questions from the public

No questions were tabled or asked by the member of public attending. However, he did compliment the Council on the ease when navigating through the website pages.

9 Membership of the following

Membership of the following committee's was resolved as follows:

- (a) Environmental Services and Planning committee. Following a discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Smeddle and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the membership of the Environmental Services and Planning committee as prepared by the Clerk is accepted”

- (b) Leisure and Recreation committee. Following a discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** by Cllr Smeddle and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the membership of the Leisure and Recreation committee as prepared by the Clerk is accepted”

- (c) The Finance and General Purposes committee (including Staffing sub-committee). Following a discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Smeddle and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the membership of the Finance and General Purposes committee (including the staffing sub-committee) as prepared by the Clerk is accepted”

Clerk The Clerk informed members that he will update and re-distribute the committee membership to all members in due course.

10 Representatives on outside bodies

Following a discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Rolfe and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the list of council representatives on outside bodies (as amended) as prepared by the Clerk is accepted”

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Clerk The Clerk informed members that he will update and re-distribute the committee membership to all members in due course.

11 Review of appointed cheque signatories for Grove Parish Council for 2026/2027

It was **MOVED** Cllr Ackers **SECONDED** Cllr Charlton and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the list of appointed cheque signatories (with the addition of Mr Watson (newly appointed RFO) is approved”

12 Review of appointed dual authorisation signatories for electronic banking for Grove Parish Council for 2026/2027

It was **MOVED** Cllr Ackers **SECONDED** Cllr Charlton and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the list of dual authorisation signatories (with the addition of Mr Watson (newly appointed RFO) for electronic banking is approved”

13 Review of direct debits and standing orders

It was **MOVED** Cllr Rolfe **SECONDED** Cllr Parnell and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the list of current direct debits and standing orders is approved”

14 Review of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls and the Financial Risk Assessment for 2026/2027

It was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Rowland and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the effectiveness of the system of internal controls and the financial risk assessment for 2026/2027 has been reviewed and are approved”

15 Review of following Parish Council Core policies

Council Standing Orders – No change

Financial Regulations – A cover sheet was provided detailing the changes.

Treasury Management and Investment Policy – A cover sheet was provided detailing the changes.

Scheme of Delegation – No change.

Code of Conduct – No Change.

Information Publication Scheme – Cllr Parnell and Cllr Rolfe both suggested that where documents were listed for hard copy only there were also list as being in electronic format on the Council’s website and vice versa.

Clerk

Following a further discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Ackers **SECONDED** Cllr Rowland and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the core documents listed above (as amended) have all been reviewed and approved”

Clerk

The Clerk said that where necessary he will make amendments and then publish the documents on the Council’s website.

Cllr Rowland left the meeting to attend a prior engagement

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16 Review of the Council's General Insurance Policy 2026/27

Following a discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Rolfe **SECONDED** Cllr Dexter and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the Council has considered and reviewed the Council's General Insurance Policy cover for 2026/27 and in particular the level of Fidelity cover”

17 Percentage increase in budget to allow the Clerk and the RFO to produce a draft budget for consideration for the 2027/28 financial year

Following a discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Rolfe and **RESOLVED** unanimously

Clerk **“that up to 3.5% is the suggested increase in budget for the 2027/28 financial year”**

18 Request from Mike Hissey for free use of Old Mill Hall to host an event

The Clerk informed the Council that Mike Hissey had requested free use of Old Mill Hall to host a music event in order to raise funds for a larger event to be held in August on the Recreation Ground.

The Clerk added that in the past the Chairman of Council has granted free use of Old Mill Hall to charity organisations for events etc, however, added that Mike Hissey is not a charity organisation, the Clerk was also concerned that if allowed, this could set a precedent.

Following a discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Batstone **SECONDED** Cllr Parnell and **RESOLVED** unanimously

Clerk **“that the request is denied, and that Mike Hissey is requested to attend a Special Full Council meeting before the end of May to brief members on his event in August which is being held on the Recreation Ground”**

19 Recommendations from the Staffing Sub-committee

(a) It was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Stock and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the Council advertise both internally and externally for a new role of Deputy Head Groundsman immediately”

Following a discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Smeddle and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the recommendation is accepted”

(b) It was **MOVED** Cllr Stock **SECONDED** Cllr Ackers and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the Council advertise both internally and externally for a new role of Administrative Assistant immediately”

Following a discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Smeddle and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the recommendation is accepted”

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- (c) It was **MOVED** Cllr Ackers **SECONDED** Cllr Rolfe and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the Council re-advertise for the role of Outside Services Manager in October 2026”

Following a discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Smeddle and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the recommendation is accepted”

20 Continuation of weed spraying the footpaths around Grove

The Clerk informed the Council that it needed to review how often its contractors weed sprayed the footpaths around Grove. He said that although this was a responsibility of the County Council (public footpaths are a responsibility of the County Council), the Parish Council have undertaken this task without remuneration for the last 21 years.

The Clerk added that the invoice presented for the amount of £3,005.10 was for existing Grove and not the Wellington Gate, Grove Meadows or Brookside Meadows developments, because they have not been adopted by the County Council yet.

Clerk Following a discussion, it was agreed to keep the current contract going for another year and the Clerk was asked to raise matter again next year

21 s106 funding request from the Wantage Lawn Tennis Club for £250,000 for new Pickle Ball /Padel Tennis courts on an existing tennis court at Manor Road, Wantage

Following a discussion, it was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Parnell and **RESOLVED** nine in favour and one abstention

Clerk **“to support an application for £32,389.79, but decline the remainder of the funds because the Council firmly believe that the s106 monies generated in Grove should be spent in Grove”**

Clerk The Clerk was also asked to identify a suitable project in Grove that would benefit from these funds.

22 Council Chairman’s communications

- (a) Land transfer TP1 – Allen Close LEAP. The Clerk presented the Council with the Land transfer note TP1 for the Allen Close LEAP. It was **MOVED** Cllr Parnell **SECONDED** Cllr Smeddle and **RESOLVED** unanimously

Clerk **“that the TP1 notice is signed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council and witnessed by the Clerk”**

- (b) The Chairman also expressed his thanks on behalf of the Parish of Grove to Chris McCarthy for his service on the Council and for the last two years as Chairman.

Meeting closed: 8.56pm

Confirmed: 16 June 2026

Chairman

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