

WOOLHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

c/o Juniper House, Aldermaston, RG7 4LJ
Email: woolhamptonclerk@gmail.com
Tel: 07877 122 127

Minutes
11th January 2026
7.45pm, Woolhampton Village Hall

This meeting will be conducted strictly in accordance with Standing Orders as adopted by Council in July 2017. All Councillors are reminded to acquaint themselves with these Standing Orders.

District Councillor: Chris Read

Councillors: Jack Lovell, Sean Garden, Laurence Harwood, Cheryl Springer

Members of Public: 3

1. To receive apologies

Ben Holden-Crowther
Malcolm Large

2. To receive declarations of interest

There were none

3. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council

The minutes of the last meeting were considered but were not approved. Approval was deferred to the next meeting.

4. Matters arising from previous meeting

Lorry parking in Woolhampton

It was noted that lorry parking in lay-bys has improved. Continued use of lay-bys has reduced, with lorries now coming and going rather than remaining parked for extended periods.

Lorry parking at Cods Hill

Members discussed lorry parking at Cods Hill, Woolhampton. Planning permission has been refused; however, no enforcement notice has been served to date. It is anticipated that the applicant may submit an appeal, in which case notification would be received via the Clerk. Members agreed that objections should be re-emphasised.

It was noted that the site remains in breach of planning. Enforcement officers are currently focused on other matters, including AWE and Pangbourne. Cllr Read expressed the view that the applicant is likely to continue seeking extensions and prolonging the

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process. Members agreed that the available course of action is to continue submitting letters and petitions.

ACTION - Cllr Read to review timescales relating to appeals and enforcement.

ACTION – Cllr Large to draft a letter confirming the Council’s position.

Five Acres/Lear Site

Members discussed ongoing unauthorised development at the Five Acres and Lear sites. It was noted that incremental additions have been made over approximately the last five years. Cllr Read confirmed that none of the shipping containers on the Five Acres site have planning permission and that additional earthworks have been carried out without authorisation. At the Lear site, a new barn has been erected which members believe is unlikely to fall within permitted development rights.

Cllr Read is awaiting confirmation that the planning authority has received additional information he has submitted. Finella Woods is the case officer; it was noted that her last site visit was approximately two years ago and members queried whether a further site visit could be requested. Concerns were raised regarding cables on the site, their purpose is unclear, the matter has been passed to SSE.

ACTION – Cllr Large to write to Finella Woods.

Footpaths

Members discussed recent resurfacing works using blacktop. Emails were previously received confirming that works would be carried out in keeping with the AONB, supported by photographs showing the agreed finish. However, insufficient notice was given prior to works commencing, and the final finish differed significantly from what had been agreed.

It was noted that non-essential spending is currently suspended at the Council. Cllr Read will pursue the matter politically. A similar issue was noted in Bucklebury, where residents historically contributed to costs but are no longer willing to do so.

Members discussed whether further correspondence should be sent. It was agreed that objections should focus on the impact on old listed buildings rather than the AONB designation, as there are many tarmacked paths within AONB areas. A villager commented that while the hard surface is safer, Cllr Lovell stated that the concern is that the Council did not deliver what was agreed.

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Cllr Lovell raised concerns about confidence in WBC. Cllr Read suggested that additional protection could be achieved by designating a conservation area.

ACTION – Cllr Large, with assistance from Cllr Lovell, to write a letter.

Church Path

It was reported that cones have been placed around a sinkhole located just beyond the porch. It was suggested that the area be monitored for approximately one month to allow it to settle before any permanent repairs are undertaken. Cllr Lovell advised that he has suitable material available to fill the hole if required.

ACTION – Cllr Lovell to provide barriers.

Shop Parking

Cllr Lovell raised concerns regarding vehicles being parked for extended periods in the shop parking area. It was noted that this had not been an issue under the previous shop owners and appears to have arisen more recently, particularly following the period when the shop was closed. It was reported that one resident parks at the public house, two Blue Badge holders park outside the shop, and one vehicle parks across the road. It was further noted that four houses in the vicinity have no allocated parking.

Reference was made to advice from Gareth Dowding from West Berks, who indicated that care must be taken if introducing timed restrictions or other measures. It was noted that the shop ownership extends only to the wooden veranda area. The adjacent house owners do not appear to own the land in question, and no deeds have been produced to confirm ownership. Councillors discussed potential options, including the creation of four or five marked spaces with a footpath behind, with any time restrictions to be determined by the community. It was acknowledged that such proposals would need to progress through the appropriate committees. It was expressed that, to the best of current knowledge, the land is unregistered, although there is a risk of challenge.

Cllr Reed reported having spoken with residents of the two closest cottages, who were supportive of the shop and indicated a willingness to move vehicles during the day and park overnight if required. Councillors noted the importance of reaching a well-considered decision, given the potential long-term implications. It was suggested that the current parking situation may be affecting the shop's ability to trade effectively, as customers may be unable to park.

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The possibility of adding white lines to delineate parking bays was discussed, although it was noted that the layby and kerb layout may present challenges. It was observed that vehicles sometimes occupy space inefficiently, with two cars taking the space of three. Consideration was given to implementing markings in accordance with a drawing produced by West Berks. Clarification was sought as to whether marked bays would result in permanent allocation. It was noted that if fewer than five spaces are created, a designated disabled bay may not be required.

Concerns were also raised regarding reports of aggressive behaviour towards the shop owners. It was noted that the owners have sought feedback and have attempted to accommodate local residents' requests, and there is concern that the ongoing situation may lead them to consider leaving. It was suggested that the layby and the spaces across the road were historically intended for passing trade to the shop and corner shop. Particular concern was expressed regarding parking adjacent to a cottage fence line, which may require vehicles to enter the A4 when manoeuvring. The south-side layby was also identified as problematic, as parking arrangements may restrict sight lines for vehicles exiting Station Road and turning right onto the A4.

ACTION – Cllr Read to contact Gareth Dowding to request cost estimates and drawings, and to clarify whether there is an option for the Council to adopt the land.

5. District Councillor's Report

District Cllr Read gave his report which will be uploaded to the parish council website.

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6. Bank Reconciliation

Woolhampton Clerk's Report - 19/01/2026		
Balance on 30 October 2025	£114,869.75	
	Payments	Receipts
Income		
Allotments		-
Payments		
Bibby (Bins October)	£29.80	
Fox Fencing (Playground gate)	£696.00	
Village Hall	£36.00	
Village Hall	£36.00	
Brabazons (September)	£727.99	
Service Charges	£6.75	
Monksmead (reissue of cheque)	£1,952.74	
Douai Park (Grant)	£8,000.00	
Brabazons (October)	£727.99	
GWR Plants (Reimbursement)	£88.94	
Website Hosting	£38.50	
Poppy Appeal (Wreath)	£25.00	
Service Charges	£7.25	
Stamps	£15.00	
E Brewer (October)	£336.48	
E Brewer (November)	£336.48	
	£13,060.92	£0.00
Balance on 18 December 2025	£101,808.83	

7. Any Other Business

Smiley Face Cameras

A resident requested an update regarding the Smiley Face speed awareness cameras. It was reported that Duncan Small, of The Old Bakery, had been progressing the initiative. It was noted that three to five volunteers are required to support the project and that Cllr

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Reed had previously distributed flyers seeking assistance. It was suggested that the lack of sufficient volunteer support may be the reason progress has stalled.

There was some confusion as to whether Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding had been formally agreed for the project. Cllr Garden clarified that he had assisted Duncan Small in establishing the necessary contact and access arrangements with the Council. The initial plan had been to borrow a device in order to collect data and assess its effectiveness, with a view to purchasing a unit at a later stage if appropriate.

Allotments

The meeting considered whether there is currently a waiting list for allotments. It was suggested that allotment availability could be advertised on the Parish Council website to gauge interest.

The possibility of establishing an Allotments Sub-Committee was also raised for consideration.

ACTION – Clerk to look into allotment availability & advertise on the website.

Ramp at Village Hall

Concern was raised that there is currently no emergency provision for wheelchair users in the event of a fire at the front of the building. It was noted that funding could potentially be considered through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies; however, the Parish Council does not hold a direct interest in the building and is therefore not responsible for the implementation or installation of any works. Cllr Reed agreed to share information regarding potential Village Hall grant funding opportunities.

ACTION – Village Hall Trustees to investigate costs and proposals and provide details to the Clerk via email.

Wasing Contract for Fields

It was noted that the Wasing field rental contract would normally have been received by this time of year. The field has previously been made available to support the Rotary Club Duck Race. Members discussed whether the Council still wishes to continue renting the field, given that ongoing maintenance costs are significant. It was suggested that, if retained for dog walking purposes, maintenance could potentially be reduced to three or four cuts per year.

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The current maintenance contract was reviewed alongside a previous version, and it was noted that the terms have changed considerably, with a reduced area of land now falling under the Council's responsibility.

ACTION – Cllr Garden to obtain alternative quotation from local residents for maintenance works

Thames Water

Cllr Garden reported that he has drafted letters addressed to Thames Water, West Berkshire Council, and the relevant traffic and environmental departments, and requested approval to issue these on behalf of the Parish Council. It was noted that overnight monitoring recorded 12 vehicles exceeding 30mph. Concerns were raised regarding cracks appearing in properties, deepening potholes, and depressions forming at the top of the road. No response has been received from Olivia Bailey.

It was noted that not all residents are affected; however, older properties, particularly those with smaller footings or built on sand, appear to be more vulnerable. Consideration was given to engaging the press in order to raise public awareness and encourage a response. It was further noted that the issue is not limited to Station Road, with properties along the A4 Bath Road also reporting vibration-related concerns. Other road users, including cyclists, were identified as being affected. In addition, large depressions in the carriageway, particularly where barriers have fallen, were described as presenting a significant safety risk.

It was suggested that correspondence be sent by recorded delivery to senior officers within the relevant authorities.

ACTION – Cllr Garden to circulate the draft correspondence to members for review.

8. To record meeting closed

21:46