

CLIFTON HAMPDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held 21 September 2026

ATTENDANCE

Councillors present: Kate (Chair), Svea, Jo, James, Franck

Councillors with apologies: Alex

Guests: Derek Stork (GARD), Director of Estates from UKAEA at Culham Science Park

UNSCHEDULED PRESENTATIONS

1. UKAEA at Culham Science Park Update

Director of Estates presented on fusion facility and AI growth zone designation (January 2025). Key points:

- 100 MW data centre planned on northern quadrant (10 acres)
- Investment partner in preferred bidder stage; announcement expected October/November
- Liberty Project: £220M, 6-year tritium breeding facility
- Site designation as AI Growth Zone brings jobs, investment, infrastructure benefits
- Open days: Saturday 24 October 2026 – book via UKAEA website: [UKAEA public open day with IF Oxford - October 2026 | UKAEA Fusion Energy](#)

Questions from Council covered water supply dependencies, data centre power requirements, solar farm connectivity, and construction timing. Presenter to provide further information on community benefits and facility access.

2. GARD (Group Against Reservoir Development) Briefing

Derek Stork presented concerns on proposed Culham–Sutton Courtenay Reservoir:

- Reservoir size tripled to 15M cubic metres; land requisition tripled to 38 sq km (October 2025)
- Capital cost now £6.6B–7.5B (2022–23 prices); 2025–26 prices estimated £7.6B+
- Construction HGV traffic doubled: 16–17 temporary access points; main access ~1M vehicle movements 2030–2043
- Emergency drawdown risk: 76 cubic metres water/second into Thames; inevitable flooding downstream if drawdown occurs, Clifton Hampden could be affected
- Development Consent Order submission expected late November 2026

Council to register as interested parties; residents encouraged to object. GARD to provide inadequate consultation statement and support materials.

It was agreed that Councillor Doreau will act on the recommendation to register the PC's concerns.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of July meeting were not approved. Amendment by Councillor McManus pending; to be recirculated and approved once amendments are confirmed.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Scout Group representatives (Dave, Ian) raised three items:

Car park surface and height barrier: Graham construction company offering free pothole repairs as part of HIF-1 work; to liaise with recreation committee on quotes received

Gig boat shelter: seek permission before planning application; to be discussed on-site with councillors

Wi-Fi restoration: essential for scout training systems; can use temporary mobile dongle; long-term solution needed

5. RECREATION GROUND REPORT

£100,000 grant received; paperwork underway; building anticipated before end of 2026

Path project: Graham to build path and remove trees and seedlings from north of recreation ground mid-October

Rita's garden project: volunteer recruitment ongoing; first works date (digging) to be scheduled in October.

6. WHARF MANAGEMENT

Strategy plan (including wildflower/meadowland restoration and tree maintenance) approved and adopted. The plan will be published on the Council's website. Annual review cycle established; prepared in agreement with Christopher Purvis.

Maintenance: cutting scheduled in one week; experimental removal of cuttings in fritillary areas to justify future budget allocation. Quotes to be sought for tree maintenance (poplars by bridge, post-drought pruning).

Boardwalk: deterioration reported to council with photos/details; awaiting response.

7. PLANNING UPDATE

Franck reported on OCC planning system changes (internal reorganisation to Groups A and B). Impact on parish: no change. Process identical; DCO consultation timeline unchanged.

One application: 16 Courtiers Green – garage and workspace at rear of property. No objections raised by neighbouring residents (Courtiers Green). Approval recommended; no further comment from council.

8. HIF-1 DRAINAGE & FLOODING

James reported ongoing liaison with council flooding expert (James Feast, OCC). Key questions outstanding:

- Drainage destination and water management strategy

- Release valve specifications

- Potential release to IF-1 flow path (not yet answered)

Concern: water may ultimately be pressurised through Victorian culvert system beneath Oxford Road, creating pinch point at Thames outfall. Council pursuing clarification from planning team.

9. PROPOSAL: NAME HIF-1 BYPASS IN MEMORY OF SUE WHEATCROFT

Christine (Wildlife Club) proposed naming Clifton Hampden bypass the "George Allen Bypass" in memory of Sue Wheatcroft.

Rationale: George Allen pioneered aircraft photography and aerial archaeology; his hangar was on-site. Naming links new development to local history (similar to "Calvin Thomas Way" at Wallingford).

VOTE: All in favour. Motion carried.

Action: Councillor McManus to contact Sam Casey (district councillor) to take proposal forward through formal naming process.

10. PROPOSAL: PLANT TREES TO CREATE WILDLIFE CORRIDOR (THAME LANE)

Wildlife Club requested tree planting on Thame Lane to join nature corridor and commemorate Sue Wheatcroft.

Council concerns: no budget, no volunteer capacity for planting and ongoing maintenance, land access (private land).

DECISION: Council unable to take on project due to capacity constraints. Council willing to offer support if Wildlife Club secures volunteers and engages Woodland Trust or Martin Drew (local tree specialist). Project noted but not parish council led.

11. LEASE RENEWAL: RECREATION GROUND

Paperwork received for lease extension to include new path strip (52 Oxford Road garden). Change is minimal; land transfer to charitable trust already completed.

VOTE: All in favour. Council approved lease extension. Signatories: Councillors Cheeseman and McManus (both worked on project; geographically convenient for execution).

12. FINANCIAL UPDATE & APPROVALS

Bank account: Currently held in name of Gill with private address. To be updated to parish council details.

Additional payments approved (Olly Bowden/Peter's timesheets for village maintenance): £152

All other payments on the agenda were approved.

13. CLERK PAY SCALE ADJUSTMENT

Guidelines issued for new clerk pay scale (backdated to 1 April 2026; October payment to include arrears). Questions raised by PC: What is the financial impact? Is it mandatory or guidance? What's the implementation process?

DECISION: Item deferred. Questions to be answered before approval; to be noted in minutes that approval is pending clarification.

14. ACTIONS & NEXT STEPS

Recreation ground grants: proceed with paperwork; monitor building timeline

Scout car park repairs: coordinate Graham's free pothole fill with scout/recreation committee quotes; meeting to align scope

Scout Wi-Fi: trial Bevan's spare mobile dongle; consider longer-term village Wi-Fi strategy for April 2027 budget cycle

Reservoir (Culham–Sutton Courtenay): register as interested parties; publish GARD materials; residents to submit individual objections by deadline

George Allen Bypass naming: Councillor McManus to contact Sam Casey (OCC) for formal process

HIF-1 drainage: Councillor Spurgeon to follow up on outstanding questions (valve specifications, release routing); chase council again if no response within 1 week

Clerk pay scale: Clerk to obtain cost impact and approval details; reconvene to approve

Previous minutes: Councillor McManus to confirm amendments; recirculate for approval

GARD briefing: Council to share Derek's slides and inadequate consultation document with parishioners; offer support for residents wishing to object

15. NEXT MEETING

16th November 2026 at 7:30pm

Minutes prepared by: Charlotte Ray, Secretary of the Clifton Hampden Parish Council

Date: 24 September 2026