Tidmarsh with Sulham
Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Tidmarsh with Sulham
On Thursday, 26th June 2025 at 8.30p.m.
held at Tidmarsh Village Hall, The Street, Tidmarsh, Reading, Berkshire. RG8 8ES

Councillors Present	
Cllr Jon Chishick (JC) – Acting Chairman	Cllr Jonathan Pearson (JP)
Cllr Mark Farrington (MF), Vice Chairman	Cllr Bronwyn Wynne (BW)
In Attendance	
Mrs. Wendy Rapley (WR), Clerk	
Apologies for Absence	
Cllr Jon Dunn (JD), Chairman (Holiday); Cllr Sima Elliot (SE) (Holiday)	

Minute no.	Item Discussed & Approved	Action on
EM25/01	**Quorum, Notice, & Apologies for Absence** A quorum was present, due notice had been given, and apologies had been received from Cllrs Dunn and Elliot. In the light of the nature of business to be discussed and decided, it was proposed for Cllr Chishick to take the Chair in Cllr Dunn's absence for this meeting. **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve Cllr Chishick to act as Chairman for this meeting. The Clerk had circulated a report setting out the background to each of the Agenda Items EM25/03 to 25/07, and proposed actions.	
EM25/02	**Declarations of Interests from Councillors** No new interests were declared.	
EM25/03	**To receive and note the Internal Auditor's Report for the financial year ending 31st March 2025 and note any recommendations for action** The Internal Auditor, Ms. Connell, had concluded her Internal Audit; copies of the Internal Audit Questionnaire that had been completed and returned to her by the Council, the Internal Auditor's main report and the Annual Internal Audit Report which forms part of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return ("AGAR") for 2024-2025 had been included in the meeting pack. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that: a) The Internal Audit Questionnaire be noted. b) The contents of the Internal Auditor's main report be noted and the recommendations contained therein and provided in subsequent dialogue with the Clerk and Cllr Chishick be noted and approved for action going forwards, such recommendations having been listed in the Clerk's report (See copy of report attached to these minutes). **For items (a) & (b) Proposed: MF, Seconded: BW** The Clerk advised work had already begun to address the recommendations from Ms. Connell and that she would bring items for approval as and when ready. The Council reviewed the Annual Internal Audit Report from Ms. Connell and its supporting statement which formed part of the AGAR. Clarification was sought as to whether PFK, the External Auditor, would accept Ms. Connell's report and supporting statement, or raise challenges to the Council; the Clerk advised that PKF, during her discussions with them, had indicated any lack of appointment of an internal auditor by the Council would be deemed "an Except For Matter" in their audit report and she had been informed such appointment was a statutory obligation. She had subsequently confirmed to PKF that Ms. Connell had been appointed in relation to this AGAR and they had been happy. Notwithstanding this, there was no certainty that PKF would not raise any questions to the Council on its failures and these would need to be dealt with as and when they occurred. Cllr Pearson expressed warm thanks to Cllr Chishick, the Clerk and the Internal Auditor for all their hard work in the past 2-3 weeks in preparing for and undertaking the Internal Audit, and for drafting, reviewing and completing the AGAR and ancillary documents ready for approval at this meeting. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that:	

	(a) The Council had received and noted the completed and signed Annual Internal Audit Report within the AGAR for 2024-2025 and its supporting statement from Ms. Connell. (b) The completed section should be published as part of the full AGAR, with a copy to be sent to PKF Littlejohn. **Proposed: JC, Seconded: JP**	**WR**
EM25/04	**To approve and Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Form 3), the "Annual Governance Statement" for the year ending 31st March 2025, with supporting statements to "No" responses** Section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31st March 2025 was presented for approval, together with a document providing explanations to any "No" responses ticked in this section; the nature of the explanations had been drafted in consultation with the Internal Auditor, and covered both an acknowledgement of omissions or failures by the Council in the financial year, but also steps being taken by the Council to demonstrate its determination to ensure a breach didn't occur again and to put right such failures or omissions. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that: a) Section 1 of the AGAR "Annual Governance Statement" be approved and signed by the Clerk and the Chairman, with the minute reference to be used as EM25/04. b) The completed section should be published as part of the full AGAR, with a copy to be sent to PKF Littlejohn. **Proposed: JP, Seconded: MF.**	**WR/JC** **WR**
EM25/05	**To consider, approve and sign Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Form 3), the "Accounting Statements" for the year ending 31st March 2025, and supporting forms.** Section 2 of the AGAR "Accounting Statements" for the year ending 31st March 2025 was presented to the meeting, together with (a) A Disclosure Statement in relation to questions 11a and 11b of Section 2, (b) an Explanation of Variances, (c) a Bank Reconciliation form. Section 2 had already been certified by the RFO that the AGAR had been prepared on a "Receipts and Payments" basis and signed prior to this meeting. **IT WAS RESOLVED** to note that the RFO had signed Section 2 on 24th June 2025 prior to circulation of the document, in accordance with the AGAR's requirements. Clarification was sought as to when the last Form 3 was completed and submitted; the Clerk advised that previously, the Council had enjoyed exemption from a limited assurance review and thus, had only been required to submit AGAR Form 2. Cllr Chishick informed the Council that although this meeting was to review Section 2 "Accounting Statements" for the year ending 31st March 2025, he had now prepared similar Section 2s for the preceding two years that had not previously been completed, namely for the years ending 31st March 2023 and 31st March 2024 as these would therefore result in a complete financial audit trail since the last AGAR submitted in 2022, and aid transparency for the Electorate. Such completed Section 1s were to be submitted to the next Council meeting on 9th July 2025 for approval, following which they would be published on the Parish website, at the Internal Auditor's recommendation. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that: a) The Accounting Statements provided at Section 2 and its supporting disclosure note were accurate and that these be approved, and for the Chairman to sign and date Section 2, recording the Minute reference as EM25/05. b) The completed section should be published as part of the full AGAR, with a copy to be sent to PKF Littlejohn. **Proposed: MF, Seconded: JP** Cllr Chishick explained the key variances highlighted in the Explanation of Variances form, with these relating to a rise in the level of grants made to Tidmarsh Millennium Green Trust by the Council in order to meet an increase in the ride-on tractor mower service charges, and the rise in costs which arose following the Council taking back the responsibility for dog and waste bin collections from WBC and subsequently outsourcing this service to Tactical Facilities Management. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Explanation of Variances be approved, for a copy to be attached to the AGAR, and for a copy to be sent to PKF Littlejohn. **Proposed: BW, Seconded: MF** The contents of the Bank Reconciliation were reviewed.	**JC** **WR** **WR**

	IT WAS RESOLVED that the Bank Reconciliation form be approved, for a copy to be attached to the AGAR, and for a copy to be sent to PKF Littlejohn. **Proposed: MF, Seconded: JP**	**WR**
EM25/06	**To note the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited AGAR in respect of the Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025 (Form 16) – to be published on the Parish Website.** A completed Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited AGAR (Form 16) was presented to the meeting; this was to be published on the Parish website no later than 27th June 2025, with the public inspection period to commence on Monday, 30th June 2025 and conclude on Friday, 8th August 2025, thereby providing the statutory 30 working days for such inspection. Clarification was sought as to whether there was a requirement for the notice to be also placed on the Parish noticeboards; the Clerk advised she had been informed by PKF that "Publishing" meant the Notice should be placed on the Parish website and that publication on the parish noticeboard was not mandatory, although the Council felt that placing a copy of the Notice on the noticeboards would ensure Electors having greater visibility of it. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the completed Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited AGAR be noted and for the Clerk to arrange for it to be published on the Parish website no later than 27th June 2025 and a copy placed on each of the Parish noticeboards.	**WR**
EM25/07	**To note the Confirmation of the Dates of the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights (Form 19) to be sent to PKF Littlejohn** A Form 19 "Confirmation of the dates of the period for the exercise of Public Rights" had been completed and presented to the meeting; this form was to be sent to PKF together with the completed AGAR and its supporting documents, but not published on the Parish website. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the completed form 19 be noted and for it to be sent to PKF.	**WR**
EM25/08	**Consideration and approval to quotations for the supply and installation of a replacement beam for the basket swing** A report setting out three quotations for the supply of a beam (150mm diameter x 4.2m length) to replace the top beam of the basket swing, and a recommendation regarding installation had been included in the meeting pack. The supply quotations were: (a) Chiltern Timber: £200 materials, £100 delivery, + VAT (b) Online Playgrounds: £122 materials, £320 delivery, + VAT (c) Playscene: £172 + VAT; no delivery as could be collected by Cllr Pearson. After consideration, **IT WAS RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of a beam from Playscene at a cost of £172 +VAT with Cllr Pearson to collect it. **Proposed: MF, Seconded: BW** Cllr Pearson was asked to ensure Playscene's invoice be addressed to Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council and sent to the Clerk for processing. In terms of installation of the new beam, the meeting was advised the Tidmarsh Millennium Green Trust's insurance policies had been reviewed and it appeared Cllr Pearson would be covered to fit the replacement beam and carry out minor repair works to it by the Trust's Employer's Liability insurance policy provided that he did not conduct works at heights over 10m, he used proprietary hand tools and only carried out minor works. Cllr Pearson stated he would not bring any claim against the Trust should he have an accident. Cllr Pearson advised he may require a longer drill bit as part of the fit of the new beam and would submit a reimbursement claim for this. The aim was to fit the new beam in July, ensure all bolts were firmly secured and any necessary wood preserving treatments were carried out to the beam, and then request RoSPA to undertake an inspection of the swing, so that the swing could be reinstated. In terms of the wood preserving treatment to be used, it was suggested Jon Murby be contacted for information on the most appropriate and safe type to use, and for Cllr Pearson and Mr. Murby to liaise to carry out such works together. **IT WAS RESOVED** that approval should be given to Cllr Pearson installing the new beam to the basket swing, provided that such works were carried out in a safe manner, using proprietary hand tools and that work was not carried out at a height in excess of 10m. **Proposed: JC, Seconder: MF** **IT WAS RESOLVED** that Jon Murby be approached for advice on the type of wood preserving treatment to be used on the wooden play equipment and to help with carrying out wood preserving works. The Council expressed disappointment that RoSPA had not inspected the top of the basket swing at the time of its inspection in April 2025 as the issue regarding the loose bolts on the beam had been	**JP** **WR**

	identified by the Groundsman about a day or so after and, looking at the photographic evidence from RoSPA, it would appear the bolts were already loose at the time of their inspection; it was felt RoSPA should undertake a more through inspection to establish safety and conditions of the play equipment, although it was pointed out that their report suggested climbing ladders and looking at the top of play equipment may not be in their inspection remit. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that a letter should be sent to RoSPA expressing disappointment at the quality of their inspection in April 2025, and the fact they at that point failed to identify the issue with the loose bolts due to the deteriorating condition of the top beam of the basket swing, as well as notify them the beam is about to be replaced with the bolts to be re-secured, and request that they inspect the beam towards the end of July or beginning of August 2025 once the works were complete.	**WR**
EM25/09	**Close of Meeting** The meeting closed at 20.50.	

Signed: Chairman

Date: 9th July 2025