

South Moreton Parish Council Draft Minutes

Meeting held at The Crown on Wednesday 30 September 2026 at 7:30 pm

These draft minutes record the decisions and agreed actions from the meeting and are subject to approval at the next meeting.

Present	Cllr Lyn Deeley (Chair), Cllr Cath Gordon, Cllr Johnny Gilbert and Cllr Sue Willis
Apologies	Cllr Richard Macdonald
Also present	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson and Cllr Crispin Topping, South Oxfordshire District Council; one resident.

1 Declarations of interest

The Clerk had declared an interest in one of the quotations considered under agenda item 11 because it had been submitted by her husband's business. The interest was recorded in the interests of transparency. The Clerk took no part in the discussion or decision.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Richard Macdonald and were accepted.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3 June 2026 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair.

4 Potential development of the school field

No further communication or progress had been received regarding the proposed residential development of the school field. The Council's previous concerns, including access, ownership and traffic implications, remained on record.

Position: There was no further update to report.

5 Public questions comments or representations

No public questions, comments or representations were received during this item.

6 SODC and OCC reports

Cllrs Anne-Marie Simpson and Crispin Topping provided the following updates.

National Grid Community Fund

- The National Grid Community Fund was seeking local ideas between 22 September and 27 October 2026. Parish councils were eligible and approximately £530,000 was expected to be available locally.
- Members noted that potential projects could include recreation ground improvements and community safety equipment.

Joint Local Plan and neighbourhood planning

- The inspectors' matters, issues and questions and the draft hearing programme had been published. Hearings were expected to take place over four weeks in November and December 2026.
- The current programme continued to indicate adoption of the Joint Local Plan in May 2027. Adoption would strengthen the planning framework while the district did not have a five-year housing land supply.
- South Moreton remained identified as an infill-only settlement in the strategic plan. District councillors nevertheless recommended reconsidering a neighbourhood plan because it could give the village greater influence over the location and form of future development.

- SODC now provided templates to help smaller parishes prepare neighbourhood plans, reducing the work and cost involved.

Resolved: The Council would revisit the case for preparing a neighbourhood plan and make a formal decision after reviewing the current guidance and templates.

Action: *Cllr Simpson to send the neighbourhood planning link and templates. The Parish Council to contact the SODC neighbourhood planning team and place the matter on a future agenda.*

Changes to planning committee procedures

Members were advised that revised procedures were expected to take effect at the end of October. Applications would generally reach committee only where they involved ten or more homes and passed a gateway test agreed by the Head of Planning and the committee chair. Most other applications would be determined by officers.

Parish councils should continue to assess all local applications and submit planning-based representations. The district councillors offered to assist with significant or difficult cases.

Other district updates

- Errors identified in the new Didcot wayfinding signage were being corrected.
- Local government reorganisation had been paused for review. Unless advised otherwise, elections in May were expected to proceed for the existing councils.

7 Recreation ground update

Autumn tidy up

Possible dates were discussed for the annual tidy up. The weekends of 7-8 November and 21-22 November were proposed because not all regular volunteers were available on 14-15 November.

Action: *Councillors to confirm availability through a WhatsApp poll and agree one date for the tidy up.*

Waste deposited from neighbouring properties

Members discussed a Christmas tree and cut garden material that appeared to have been placed over the boundary onto the recreation ground. The concern was the precedent this would create if household waste continued to be deposited on public land.

Action: *Cllr Gordon to contact the neighbouring resident informally, establish whether the material was theirs, request its removal and offer practical help if required.*

Play equipment

A request from local parents for higher monkey bars near the climbing wall was reported. Members were open to considering this as a future improvement, subject to funding, design and safety requirements. Defibrillator provision remained the higher priority.

8 Grants

The Council discussed seeking grant support for community safety and recreation ground improvements. The SODC Climate Action Fund was also noted as a newly available funding route for eligible projects.

Action: *The Clerk to contact the relevant grants team about eligibility for defibrillator equipment and a protective shelter or cabinet, copying the district councillors into the correspondence.*

9 Planning application and highway matters

The Council considered EIA scoping consultation R3.0116/26 for a new signalised four-arm junction at the A4130 and Lady Grove East junction, a new single-carriageway road east of Didcot, and active travel infrastructure. Members noted that this was an EIA scoping consultation rather than a planning application.

The available information did not make the precise road alignment sufficiently clear to all members. Concerns were raised about additional local traffic and HGVs using South Moreton as a cut-through, particularly where large vehicles already reached the narrow bridge and had to reverse.

Members also discussed whether the village road should remain classified as a B road. It was argued that the narrow High Street, obstructed passing places and potential delay to emergency vehicles made the route unsuitable for through traffic.

Action: *The Parish Council to identify the responsible highways authority and make preliminary enquiries about improved HGV signage, route management and the process for reviewing the road's B-road classification, emphasising road safety and emergency access.*

10 Finance

Payments

Month	Payee	Gross	VAT	Net
September	Charlotte Ray - Clerk salary	£401.28	-	£401.28
September	Simplicity Payroll Service	£26.40	£4.40	£22.00
September	HMRC - NI liability	£46.86	-	£46.86
September	ROSPA - play safety inspection	£176.40	£29.40	£147.00
September	Bibby - dog bin emptying	£191.77	£31.96	£159.81
October	Charlotte Ray - Clerk salary	£431.86	-	£431.86
October	Clerk salary pay rise back pay	£83.13	-	£83.13
October	Simplicity Payroll Service	£26.40	£4.40	£22.00
October	HMRC - NI liability	£46.86	-	£46.86
October	Bibby - dog bin emptying	£191.77	£31.96	£159.81

Resolved: The listed payments for September and October 2026 were approved.

Resolved: The bank statements for July and August 2026 were approved.

ESP Play Limited invoice

The outstanding invoice for £4,256.10 for the new Birdnest Swing would remain unpaid until the identified defects had been rectified. Cllr Macdonald was already pursuing the matter with the supplier.

Action: *Cllr Macdonald to continue liaising with ESP Play Limited. Payment may be released only once the Council is satisfied that the outstanding issues have been resolved.*

Clerk pay scales

The new 2026-27 clerk pay scales and the backdating of the increase to 1 April 2026 were noted. The October payment schedule included the relevant back pay.

11 Dog bin service provider

Three quotations had been obtained. The Council compared continuation with the existing service against appointing Cleanscape Waste, a local provider offering weekly emptying and bin cleaning at a comparable net cost. The Clerk's declared interest was noted and she took no part in the decision.

Resolved: Subject to written confirmation of the commercial terms, Cleanscape Waste would be appointed to provide weekly collections. The price should be fixed until at least 31 December 2027, with any later increase limited and agreed. Usage and collection frequency would be reviewed quarterly, with the option to reduce suitable bins to fortnightly collections if evidence supported this.

Action: *Obtain written confirmation from Cleanscape Waste. Once received, give the required notice to the existing provider and arrange the service transfer.*

12 Defibrillator cabinet at the school

The school defibrillator remained operational, but its cabinet had been damaged by heat and needed replacement. The expected cost was approximately £450-£550.

Resolved: A replacement cabinet for the existing school defibrillator would be purchased without waiting for the outcome of a grant application.

Resolved: Grant funding would be sought for a second defibrillator at The Crown and for suitable protective housing. Installation and power arrangements would be confirmed with the pub.

Action: *The Clerk to arrange purchase of the replacement school cabinet and prepare the grant enquiry or application for the additional equipment.*

13 SODC planning procedures

This item had been covered under the district councillors' report at item 6. No further decision was required.

14 Monthly tasks calendar

The monthly tasks calendar was reviewed. No additions were requested.

15 Items for the next agenda

Members agreed that the Council should consider a village-wide community event for 2027, such as a party in the park or traditional sports day. Possible involvement of the church and school, and an arrangement to alternate responsibility for future community events, would be explored.

The community book sale at the church on 12 December 2026 was noted.

Action: *Add a 2027 community event to the agenda for the next meeting.*

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on Wednesday 25 November 2026 at The Crown.

Meeting close

The meeting closed at approximately 8:27 pm.

Action register

Ref	Action	Owner	Target
A1	Send the current neighbourhood planning guidance and template link.	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	As soon as available
A2	Contact the SODC neighbourhood planning team and schedule a formal review.	Parish Council	Future agenda
A3	Confirm the recreation ground tidy-up date through the councillor WhatsApp poll.	Councillors	October 2026
A4	Contact the neighbouring resident about material deposited on the recreation ground and offer help with removal.	Cllr Cath Gordon	Before tidy up
A5	Check grant eligibility for defibrillator equipment and protective housing, copying the district councillors.	Clerk	Before next meeting
A6	Investigate HGV signage, route management and the process for reviewing the B-road classification.	Parish Council	Report back
A7	Continue pursuing rectification of the Birdnest Swing issues; withhold the ESP Play Limited invoice until resolved.	Cllr Richard Macdonald	Ongoing
A8	Confirm Cleanscape Waste's pricing and terms, then give notice to the existing provider and arrange the transfer.	Chair and Clerk	Before transfer
A9	Purchase the replacement school defibrillator cabinet and prepare the grant application for additional provision.	Clerk	As soon as practicable
A10	Add discussion of a 2027 community event to the next agenda.	Clerk	25 November 2026

Signed as an accurate record	Date