

MARKET LAVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk & RFO: Tanya West Tel: 07770 679697 or Email: clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk
VAT Registration Number: 296 9715 35 / Website: www.marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of an Old School Committee Council Meeting held on Monday 13th October 2025 at 7.15pm in the Old School, Market Lavington

Present:

Councillors: Fred Davis (Chair); Di Fraser; Duncan Poole.

Officers: Tanya West – Parish Clerk & RFO

Public: One member of the public who was also a long-standing 'Friend of the Old School'.

It was advised the meeting would be recorded by the Parish Clerk, to aid with the writing of the minutes. The recording would be deleted after the approval of the written minutes.

25/26-091 Election of Committee Chair

It was resolved to elect Cllr Fred Davis as the Chair of the Old School Committee for the 2025-26 municipal year. It was noted that Cllr Di Fraser would be the Old School Committee representative on the Finance Committee as Cllr Davis is already represented as the Vice-Chair of Full Council.

25/26-092 Attendance and Apologies for Absence

With all members of the Committee in attendance, there were no apologies for absence.

25/26-093 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Participate

- a) No further interests to those already disclosed to the Monitoring Officer were declared.
- b) No dispensation requests had been received.

25/26-094 Adjournment for Public Participation (maximum of 5 minutes)

The meeting was adjourned at 7.17pm and resumed at 7.22pm.

Mr Mike Bridgeman [Friend of the Old School] was welcomed to the meeting. It was noted that he had previously been actively involved with the Old School site, including maintaining the flower planters, decorating and odd jobs. Members expressed appreciation for his longstanding contribution to the village and his knowledge of the Old School.

Mr Bridgeman explained that while he remains interested in the Old School and is willing to assist, when possible, his current health issues and caring responsibilities limit the time he can commit on a regular basis. He confirmed that he would be happy to provide advice and practical help on an occasional or case-by-case basis but did not wish to take on any formal committee role.

It was agreed that Mr Bridgeman would be included in future calls for volunteers, with the understanding that he may choose whether or not to participate depending on the nature of the activity.

The Chair recorded the Council's thanks to Mr Bridgeman for his past support and his continued willingness to assist informally in the future.

25/26-095 Minutes of Council Meetings

The minutes of the Old School Committee meeting held on 22nd October 2024 had been circulated in advance of the meeting; it was **resolved** that they be accepted as a true and correct record of that meeting and were signed by the Chair accordingly.

25/26-096 Review of Finances

A report on expenditure for the 2025/26 financial year for those budgets specifically linked to the Old School Committee was reviewed at the meeting. The following points were raised:

- Some of the regular hirers had confirmed they would be paying their invoices in October, so the year to date receipts were lower than expected.
- The occasional use income was lower than budgeted.

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- That in future the heating oil tank should be topped up during the summer to obtain the most cost effective rates. Cllr Poole to advise the Clerk of details of a competitive supplier.
- The Clerk to investigate the green bin licence renewal.
- The payments for the year to date are significantly under budget, however, several items will be invoiced in quarter three and four of the financial year.

It was **resolved** to recommend to the Finance Committee that any budget surpluses remaining at the end of the financial year be allocated to an Old School specific ear marked reserve to be spent on future improvement works.

The Clerk to make any relevant updates and investigations into outstanding costs for the remainder of the year and to update the Committee members accordingly.

25/26-097 Old School Routine Maintenance and Other Works

The Committee reviewed maintenance works completed since the previous meeting and discussed new items requiring action as part of routine upkeep or future improvement. The following points were noted:

- **Gutter Brushes:** The new gutter brushes have been purchased but are yet to be installed. Cllr Davis agreed to undertake the installation, with assistance from a neighbour of the Old School, using his own ladders. The work is to be completed by the end of the year. It was noted that the gutters will still require periodic cleaning, as the brushes do not prevent all debris build-up. The Clerk was asked to obtain a quotation for annual gutter cleaning to include in the next financial year's budget.
- **Damp on Exterior Wall:** Damp remains present on the outside wall of the main hall. It was noted that the downpipe often becomes blocked by birds' nests, preventing proper drainage. The downpipe and adjacent guttering are to be cleared as a preventative measure.
- **Internal Signage:** Signs above the radiators that have come loose are to be re-fixed to the wall.
- **Main Hall Floor:** Damage to the main hall floor surface requires repair before it worsens or is affected by damp from mopping. Cllr Davis advised that he has suitable filler for the repair.
- **Internal Paintwork:** Some window sills and wall areas have been marked or picked at and require repainting.
- **Front Door Weatherboard:** The weatherboard at the base of the front door requires light sanding and repainting. The filler remains in place, and suitable paint is stored in the boiler room. The Clerk to arrange for the Handyman to carry out the work.
- **Dining Area Blind:** The window blind in the dining area is broken and currently remains permanently down.
- **Secondary Glazing:** Several secondary glazing panels in the main hall have come off their runners and need to be repositioned.
- **Centre Storage Unit:** The brass vents to be fitted in the storage unit doors require purchasing and installation.
- **External Clearance:** The Handyman has been asked to clear the leaves and debris around the Old School, scheduled for later this week.
- **Storage Improvements:**
 - New shelving will be purchased and installed in the storage units to improve organisation and accessibility. Cllr Poole and the Clerk will liaise on this.
 - Plastic storage tubs will be purchased for Parish Council files and equipment currently stored in the loft.
 - The Clerk will contact the Guides regarding their storage arrangements. It was noted that the loft joists are not load-bearing and should not be used for heavy storage. Once new shelving is installed, items can be relocated accordingly.
- **Equipment:** The Clerk will liaise with the family of Chris Reason regarding the return of his cement mixer and obtaining back the key to the storage unit.

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It was **agreed to hold a working party on Thursday 16 October 2025 at 10:00am** to address as many of these items as possible.

The **Clerk will also contact regular hirers** to remind them to:

- Return tables and chairs to the correct layout after use.
- Leave the Old School, particularly the kitchen and bin areas, clean and tidy.
- Take care to avoid damaging paintwork or flooring.

Finally, the **Clerk will prepare a draft budget for 2026/27** and circulate it to Committee members for comment ahead of the next Finance Committee meeting.

25/26-098 Hire Charges and Terms and Conditions

The Clerk presented a report comparing hire rates and facilities at the Old School with five other local halls. Following review, the Committee agreed the following revised hire rates, to take effect from 1 April 2026:

- Regular Users (Rate 1): increase from £8.50 to £9.00 per hour
- Regular Users / Village Residents (Rate 2): increase from £11.00 to £11.50 per hour
- Commercial / Non-Village Residents (Rate 3): increase from £16.00 to £17.00 per hour

For Rates 2 and 3, a £1.00 per hour discount will apply to any bookings of four hours or more.

The Committee also discussed the possibility of hiring out tables, chairs, and crockery for private village events. It was noted that, at present, the administrative effort and limited return make this option not viable. However, the matter may be reviewed again in future, and any requests received in the meantime will be considered on an ad hoc basis.

The **Terms and Conditions of Hire** were reviewed, and the following amendments and reminders were agreed:

- Regular hirers are to be reminded of their responsibility to report any damage to equipment or fittings (Item 11).
- Item 20 to be amended to remove reference to cleaning materials. Hirers should have access to toilet rolls and paper towels only; cleaning products (other than those already in the kitchen) will not be made available.
- For one-off bookings, a non-refundable booking deposit of 20% of the total hire cost will be required, with the remaining balance due two weeks before the hire date.

The Clerk will prepare a revised draft of the Terms and Conditions and circulate it to Committee members for approval prior to publication.

25/26-099 Publicity and Marketing

The Clerk had produced a report with the aim of assessing how well current publicity and marketing methods (website, Facebook, leaflets, posters, word of mouth) serve the objectives of raising awareness, driving bookings, keeping regular users informed, and attracting new users. The report detailed strengths and weaknesses of each channel, and proposed options for enhancements or alternatives. This report was reviewed, and it was agreed for the Clerk to commence implementation of the following recommendations as suggested in the report.

1. Quick wins

- Add a timetable / class-schedule page to the website.
- Ensure "contact / enquiry" is prominent on every page.
- Revive the Facebook presence: a few regular posts, pinned post with booking info – but published onto the Parish Council Facebook page and shared to community pages. Also promoting Children's party booking rates.
- Refresh printed posters with updated branding + QR codes to website. Distribute amended posters to local high-traffic places – promote children's party bookings .

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2. Medium-term actions (1–3 months)

- Install analytics / tracking on website to see where traffic is coming from.
- User / stakeholder feedback - Survey regular users (hirers, participants) to ask how they learned about the Old School, which channels they check, and what info they find lacking. Ask occasional or prospective users why they did or did not book / use the facility (was the information easy to find?).
- Review registration on Google Business / Google Maps with the hall as a venue (check photos, contact, website) so people searching “hall for hire near me” find the OS.

3. Longer-term / strategic changes

- Fully integrate or migrate into the Parish Council website (if that gives advantages).
- Build or integrate a live booking / availability calendar (or at least a staff-updated calendar).
- Contact local groups/businesses/organisations by email/newsletter advising of hire rates and availability (including introductory offer – tbc)
- Run occasional boosted social media ads to reach broader local audience.
- Investigate apps like “My Community” or local event aggregator sites (some towns have local event listing platforms) to list the hall’s events and hire availability.
- Monitor results (bookings, enquiries from different channels) and drop underperforming channels, scale successful ones.

The Committee reviewed the existing **printed leaflet and business cards**. It was noted that the leaflet requires several updates, including revision of the contact number, and that distribution opportunities are limited. As most users now access information online, it was agreed that reprinting the leaflet would not be cost-effective at this time.

However, the business cards were considered to remain useful. It was agreed that Cllr Davis will obtain quotations for the printing of new business cards.

25/26-100

Committee Membership and Terms of Reference

The current Terms of Reference document for the Old School Committee was reviewed at the meeting. It was **resolved** to recommended to Full Council the following suggested amendments for approval:

Annual list of Tasks

- Review of utility usage and supply. Move to April/May from October/November.
- Review of publicity and marketing. Add this to the annual list of tasks for October/November.

Membership

- *The Committee shall have at least five voting members.* To change five to three.

25/26-101

Other Old School Matters

This item provided an opportunity for Councillors and the Clerk to raise any matters not already included on the agenda. (Items requiring a decision will be carried forward to a future meeting.)

- The Clerk reported that the **Wiltshire Council Library Service** had highlighted the **doors to the John Reid Room** as needing work to meet **fire door standards**. As the Old School is a listed building, the Clerk has begun investigating the implications of any alterations. Initial findings suggest that many original solid wood doors may already meet requirements, although some modifications could be necessary. Members discussed the issue, noting that the doors are generally kept open when the library is in use. Further investigations are ongoing, and the Clerk will report back to the Committee once more information is available.
- The **Clerk was asked to liaise with the cleaner** regarding the condition of the **kitchen sink and bins**.

25/26-102

Items for next agenda

No new items were raised to be included on the agenda for the next Old School Committee meeting.

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25/26-103

Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Old School Committee is to be determined, but would likely be April/May 2026.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.42pm.

Signed..... Date.....

DRAFT