

Parish Council Update – March 2026

As March arrives, the first signs of spring are beginning to show, lighter evenings, new growth, and that welcome feeling of the parish waking up after winter. It's a natural moment to look ahead with optimism and energy, as the year starts to take shape, and our community's projects gather momentum.

This edition offers a chance to share what's happening across the parish as we move into the spring months: updates on ongoing work, early progress on new initiatives, and a look at the priorities that will guide us through the season. Whether or not you're able to join our parish meetings, we want everyone to feel connected to the decisions and developments shaping our shared spaces.

Your involvement, ideas, and support continue to make a real difference. As the days brighten, we look forward to building on that sense of community and making 2026 a positive year for all.

During March we'll be renewing residents' allotment agreements, so please keep an eye out for emails from us. If you decide not to renew your plot this year, please let us know so we can offer it to someone on the waiting list. For those planning to renew, now is a great time to start thinking about your next fruit and veg projects as the growing season begins to take shape.

Planning Highlights

A parish council is a *statutory consultee*. This means Swindon Borough Council must notify the parish council about planning applications; the parish council does not have the power to make the final decision to approve or refuse them, that decision is made solely by Swindon Borough Council. The parish council's role is to provide local knowledge, raise concerns or objections, and represent the views of the community. Its comments are considered part of the decision-making process. Members of the public can view applications, read parish council comments, and submit their own feedback here:

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20268/planning_applications/380/view_or_comment_on_a_planning_application

Applications Received

Application Ref: S/26/0028 Description: Internal and external alterations to fire damaged warehouse. Site Address: Unit 1, Crompton Road, Groundwell Industrial Estate Swindon SN25 5AW. Decision: The PC have no reason to object.
Application Number: S/26/0115 Proposal: Erection of part two storey and part single storey rear extension, front porch and bay windows with canopy, new roof tiles, conversion of garage to habitable and associated works. Site Address: 89 Ermin Street, Blunsdon Swindon SN26 8AA Decision: The PC have no reason to object.

Decisions Made by SBC

Application Ref: S/25/1067 Proposal: Demolition of garage and relocation of summer house, and erection of 1no. detached dwelling, replacement garage and associated works (Variation of Condition 2) from previous application S/22/1266 regarding proposed plans. Site Address: Land At The Ferns, Front Lane, Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7BJ. Decision: Application Granted by SBC

Application Number: S/25/0086/RACH Proposal: Erection of 2. No dwellings. Site Address: Land Adjacent To Happy Acre, Kingsdown Lane Blunsdon Swindon SN25 5DL. Decision: Application Granted by SBC

Application Ref: S/25/0302/LZWI Description: Erection of 3no self build homes following the demolition of existing dwelling and garage. Site Address: Dinton, Broad Bush Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7DH. Decision: Application Granted by SBC

Application number: S/HOU/25/1651/JOPL Proposal: Erection of side dormer windows, raising of existing roof. Site Address: Agent: 24 Sutton Park, Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7BB. Decision: Application Granted by SBC

S/HOU/25/1646/ADHI Proposal: Erection of rear dormer windows and loft conversion. Site Address: 30 Thames View, Blunsdon Swindon SN26 8AQ. Application Granted by SBC

Application Number: S/TPO/25/1611 Re: Works to Tree under TPO 2025-01. At: Orchard House, Hunts Hill, Blunsdon, Swindon. Decision: Application Granted by SBC

Application Number: S/25/0809/RACH Proposal: Erection of a temporary synthetic fuel facility, solar array and associated Infrastructure. Site Address: Land Off Little Rose Lane, Swindon. Decision: Application Granted by SBC.

We have been informed that planning application S/20/1685/TB, relating to the proposed anaerobic digester facility near Castle Eaton, has now been withdrawn by the applicant. This means the proposal will not proceed in its current form, and the planning process for this application has formally concluded.

The Rivan application has been granted planning permission for the development proposed, subject to a detailed list of conditions. Although approval has been given, this is not the end of the process. The development cannot begin until all conditions have been fully met, and these requirements are extensive.

The full list of conditions can be viewed on the Swindon Borough Council website:

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20268/planning_applications/380/view_or_comment_on_a_planning_application

The Parish Council is very disappointed with the outcome, but our focus now is on supporting residents as the project moves into its next stages. We will monitor progress closely to ensure the developer is held to the highest possible standards and that all planning conditions are properly enforced.

In parallel, the Parish Council will be reviewing the decision process in detail to understand whether any further avenues of challenge or scrutiny may be available.

Projects & Improvements

We are now progressing for the water connection to the new office after many months of requests and follow-ups. Despite this delay, the office has already hosted numerous meetings and is proving to be a valuable base for council activity. While on site, it's also encouraging to see the parish-council-funded car park being well used — supporting families arriving and leaving school, visitors to the park, and the teams using the MUGA.

If you are selling your property, please be aware that estate agent boards are permitted only within the boundary of the property being marketed. To help keep the village looking tidy and to avoid obstruction or confusion, boards must not be placed on verges, junctions, green spaces, or any other public areas. Thank you for helping us maintain a neat and welcoming village environment.

Community Groups & Events

- Golden Gatherings dates for March are 4th and 18th, any questions please contact:
Goldengatheringsblunsdon@gmail.com

Speed watch Update

Speed Watch Data Table (Jan 2026 and early Feb 2026)

Date	Vehicles counted	Exceeding limit	Maximum Speed mph	Speed Limit	Start	Finish	Area
28/01/2026	219	2	40	30	14:00	15:00	Junction with Sams Lane
30/01/2026	347	3	37	30	13:55	14:55	Cycle Track
31/01/2026	195	10	59	30	09:00	10:00	Telephone Box
02/02/2026	30	3	39	30	10:30	11:15	Opp No 16
04/02/2026	268	7	41	30	15:05	16:00	Minerva Heights

January brought persistent wet weather, which meant our Community Speedwatch volunteers were only able to carry out a limited number of checks. Despite this, several monitoring sessions did take place in key areas of the village, including the junction with Sams Lane, the Cycle Track, the Telephone Box area, opposite No. 16, and Minerva Heights.

Across these locations, most drivers were travelling within the 30mph limit. However, the session near the Telephone Box recorded noticeably higher speeds compared with the other sites, highlighting it as an area where driver's behavior continues to be a concern. The remaining locations showed generally good compliance, with only a small number of vehicles exceeding the limit.

If you have a little time to spare and would like to support this work, please get in touch at ianjankinson@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk.

Challenges and areas of focus

As we head into the third month of the year, we want to share a little more about what your councillors are working on. This section offers a few short snapshots of current projects, some positive, some more challenging, but all part of the everyday work involved in serving our community.

We're committed to being open about the issues we're tackling, the progress being made, and the areas where we're still pushing for better outcomes. By sharing these updates, we hope to give you a clearer sense of what's happening behind the scenes and the level of dedication we aim to bring to every task, big or small.

Highways Sign: The developer, Crest Nicholson, is currently working to complete the northern half of William Morris Way to allow it to progress toward adoption, once finished they'll start work of the southern half and Greene Street. The directional sign remains in place for the A419, so the Haul Road will be gaining extra traffic.

High Street: A replacement traditional wooden footpath sign has been put in place near the Blunsdon House Hotel.

Back Lane/Front Lane: The blocked gully on Back Lane has now been cleared by SBC, thank you to the resident for reporting this. We have also had a quick repair to a large pothole on Back Lane due to help from residents reporting to SBC.

Swindon Borough Council has advised us that Thames Water will be carrying out work later this month. To allow this, an official Order will be in place prohibiting vehicles from using Front Lane at the junction with Back Lane.

Traffic will be diverted via Back Lane and Ivy Lane in both directions.

The Order legally runs from 23 March 2026 for up to six months, but the actual works are expected to take place between 23 and 25 March 2026 only.

MUGA: A portaloos has also been provided for MUGA users should they need facilities during their booking. In addition, we are currently progressing plans for bicycle stands to support those travelling to the MUGA or park area, with installation to follow once final arrangements are complete.

Line painting carparks: We are just sorting line painting at the village hall car park and loading bay at shop to help identify areas.

Hunts Hill: The gully has now been fixed super quick, thanks to Cllr Hughes, Ward Cllr Weisingers & SBC.

Ermin Street: You will be able to watch our 4000 new native trees along Ermin Street come into leaf and begin to grow this spring. Look out for Silver Birch, Hawthorn, Hazel and Wild Service trees amongst others. Look out also, for our 7000 new perennial flowers which will grow in strength and number and give a better display year-on-year. Yellow Aconite is the earliest flowering bulb we planted but can take a year or two to get properly established. It's beautiful yellow flowers form carpets of colour in January and February. Other flowers to look out for will include Common Primrose, Wood Anemone, Bluebells, Wild Daffodil (the native one) and Snowdrops. Many other native species have also been sown using a wildflower meadow mixture, but the majority will not flower until 2027. Yellow Rattle is one that we will see this year, and it is known as the 'Meadowmaker', which is why we sowed a lot of it! It parasitises on the roots of grasses, stealing its energy from them rather than taking it from the soil. This reduces the prevalence of grasses and allows more room for flowers! For more information, or to volunteer to assist in the ongoing management and monitoring of our new wildflowers areas, please contact our Clerk debbiebraiden@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk.

Remember: pot holes, road and path damage is the responsibility of SBC who have an online reporting system – but multiple reporting helps get the job done!

Parish Precept Update for 2026/27

Blunsdon Parish Council has reviewed the precept for the coming year, and we want to explain the reasons behind the change.

For several years we have kept our Band D precept deliberately low compared with many similar parishes. However, the cost of delivering services has continued to rise, and the parish has taken on more responsibilities previously managed by Swindon Borough Council. These include maintaining public green spaces, emptying over 30 bins, managing the cemetery and churchyard grounds, hedge cutting, leaf clearance, building maintenance, and supporting community facilities such as the Village Hall, Community Building and MUGA. Blunsdon has also grown significantly, increasing demand on our services, while inflation has raised the cost of contractors, utilities, insurance and essential maintenance.

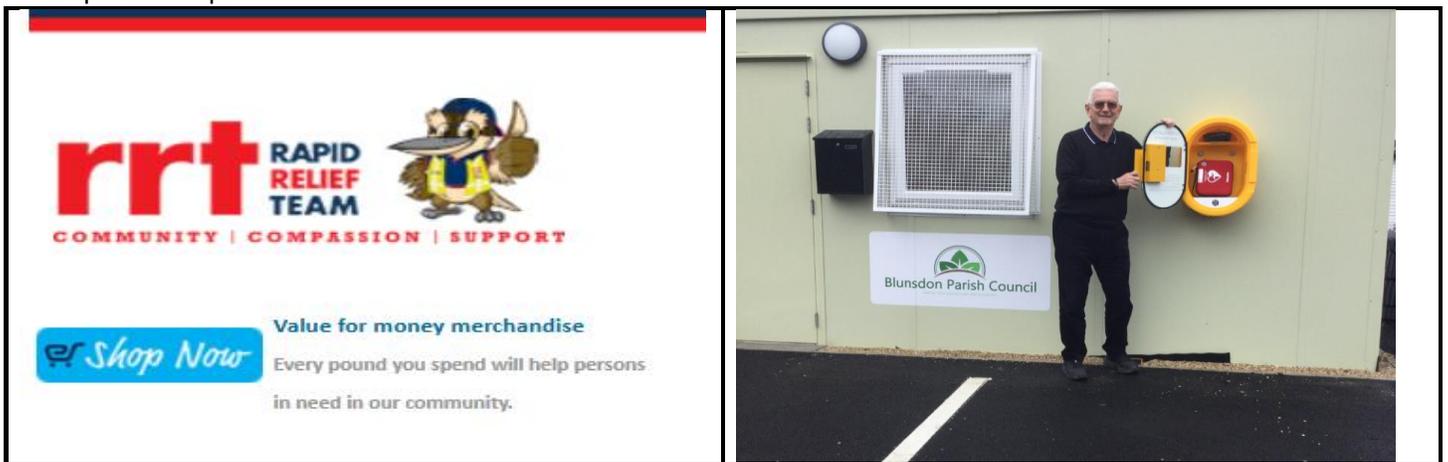
To remain financially sustainable and continue providing the services residents rely on, the Band D precept for 2026/27 will be £124.20. This brings us more in line with similar parishes and ensures we can maintain facilities, meet legal obligations, and plan for future needs. Our Finance page on our website blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk contains a resident's precept letter with a more detailed brief on what the precept is and why it has changed, in addition a full breakdown of the parish budget will be available on our website from the end of March. If you have any questions, please contact the Clerk at debbiebraiden@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk

Thank You to the Rapid Relief Team

Blunsdon Parish Council would like to extend our sincere thanks to the **Rapid Relief Team (RRT)** for their generous funding of the new defibrillator and exterior cabinet for the MUGA. RRT is a global charitable organisation known for providing practical support to communities, emergency services, and people in need through compassion-driven volunteer work.

Their contribution has enabled us to install a vital piece of lifesaving equipment that will benefit everyone who uses the MUGA, the park, and the surrounding area. Having a defibrillator on site significantly improves emergency response capability and strengthens the safety of our community.

We are proud to support the work of the Rapid Relief Team and deeply appreciate their commitment to helping local communities thrive. Their generosity has made a meaningful and lasting difference to our village, and we are grateful for their partnership.



Meet Your Councillor / Staff Member

Each month, we'll be introducing you to the people working behind the scenes at Blunsdon Parish Council.

Meet Councillor Peter Hughes

Role on the Parish Council:

Peter's main responsibilities centre on public footpaths and roads, ensuring they remain safe, accessible, and well-maintained for everyone in the village. He is also an active member of the local Speedwatch team, helping to monitor and address speeding concerns across the parish. His focus is firmly on improving road and pedestrian safety and ensuring that Blunsdon's network of footpaths remains usable and enjoyable for residents.

What Peter gets involved with:

Peter contributes to a wide range of Parish Council work, drawing on over 36 years of experience in food retail management, along with his current part-time roles in retail auditing and supply chain. This background gives him a strong understanding of operational planning, problem-solving, and community-focused decision-making.

He uses this experience to:

- Support discussions on infrastructure, maintenance, and village improvements
- Bring a practical, structured approach to council decisions
- Help shape policies that balance village needs with long-term sustainability
- Advocate for safer roads, better footpaths, and improved pedestrian access

Peter's ability to combine real-world experience with a calm, thoughtful approach makes him a valuable voice in council discussions.

His connection to the village:

Peter has deep roots in the local area, having lived here since 1974. He returned to Blunsdon in 2020 after previously living in the village for three years, drawn back by its character and sense of community. He enjoys the peace and quiet, the beautiful scenery, and the friendly atmosphere, especially among fellow dog walkers, who help make the village feel like home.

What he enjoys about the village:

For Peter, Blunsdon's charm lies in its blend of rural tranquillity and strong community spirit. He appreciates the open spaces, the slower pace of life, and the way residents look out for one another. The village's natural beauty and welcoming feel are what make it such a special place to live.

A few words about Peter:

Peter decided to join the Parish Council after becoming increasingly frustrated by the level of service provided by Swindon Borough Council and the perceived neglect of the village. Rather than simply accepting the situation, he chose to get involved and work towards positive change.

He is particularly passionate about improving local services and infrastructure, and he wants to ensure that the Parish Council plays an active role in reducing the impact of ongoing housing developments on village life. His goal is to help protect what makes Blunsdon unique while supporting thoughtful, community-led improvements for the future.

Dates for Your Diary

Parish Council Meetings – The next two meetings for the Parish Council will be on:

March's Full Council meeting to be held Monday 2nd March at 7.30pm

March's Finance meeting to be held on Monday 16th March at 7.30pm

If you want to come along, please let us know. Details are on the Parish Council notice boards, Website and FB page.

Contact: Ian Jankinson – ianjankinson@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk – 07702 684281

March 7th: Ward Surgery Meeting at The Village Shop (11:30am) it is an informal drop-in session where residents can meet with parish councillors to discuss local matters, share ideas, or ask for guidance. It's a relaxed and welcoming opportunity to chat face-to-face without needing an appointment, helping councillors stay closely connected to the community and the issues that matter to you. .

Did You Know?

Blunsdon was once home to one of the highest points in the Swindon area — **Blunsdon Hill** — which offered such clear views across the Vale of the White Horse that it became a key landmark for travelers long before modern roads and signage existed.

