



Parish Council Update – May 2026

As May arrives, the parish is beginning to show the full confidence of late spring. The hedgerows are greener; the days feel noticeably longer, and there's a real sense of the village opening after the cooler months. It's a time when outdoor projects gather momentum, and community activity naturally increases.

This edition brings updates on the work taking place across the parish, progress on ongoing initiatives, and the priorities guiding us as we move towards the summer period. Even if you're not able to attend meetings, we want everyone to feel informed and connected to the decisions shaping our shared spaces.

With the growing season now well underway, you'll start to see more visible maintenance around the village—from grass cutting and path clearance to early preparations for summer works. May is always a busy month, but it's also one of the most rewarding as the parish begins to look its best.

During April & May, parish councils enter their annual governance and accountability cycle. During this period, councils approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), confirm the findings of the internal audit, and publish key financial information for residents in line with national transparency requirements. It is also the point in the year when councils re-adopt their core financial policies and review the financial controls that will guide their work for the year ahead.

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 on the Swindon Borough Council website.

Applications Received

Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0409 Description: Erection of single storey side extension. Site Address: 2 Kingsdown Lane, Blunsdon, Swindon SN25 5DL BPC decision: Approved

Decisions Made by SBC

Application Ref: TPO-26-0122, Re: Works to Tree T002 under ref BOSTPO-26-2009. At: The Cold Harbour, Ermin Street, Blunsdon, Swindon, **Decision from SBC: Granted consent**

Application Number: S/26/0028/ADHI, Re: Internal and external alterations to fire damaged warehouse. At: Unit 1, Crompton Road Groundwell Industrial Estate Swindon SN25 5AW **Decision from SBC: Granted consent**

Over the past few months, the Parish Council has been seeking professional legal advice regarding the possibility of pursuing a Judicial Review in relation to the Rivan application for the erection of a temporary synthetic fuel facility, solar array and associated infrastructure. During this period, we raised a number of concerns about elements of the decision-making process that we believed had not been fully reported. The volume of documentation has been substantial, and the timeframe for consideration has been tight, as strict deadlines apply to all Judicial Review proceedings. Following a detailed legal assessment, we have been advised that the likelihood of achieving a positive outcome would be in the region of 10%, and that significant costs, funded from public money, would need to be committed to supporting any action.

All councillors have been fully involved at each stage of this process. While the Parish Council is disappointed that the prospects of success are not stronger, we must ensure that public funds are used responsibly and cannot proceed where the risk of financial loss outweighs the potential benefit to the community.

Annual Parish Meeting

May is an important month in the parish council calendar, as it marks the start of the new civic year. Across England, most parish councils hold their **Annual Parish Council Meeting** in May. This is a formal meeting where the council elects its Chair and Vice-Chair for the year ahead, reviews its committees, confirms memberships, and adopts key governance documents such as standing orders, financial regulations, and policies.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on **21st May**, providing an important opportunity for residents to come together and engage directly with the work of the parish over the past year. Unlike a standard council meeting, the Annual Parish Meeting is a gathering of the electorate. It is designed to give parishioners a clear overview of the activities, achievements, and challenges that have shaped the past year, as well as the priorities that will guide the months ahead.

Representatives from local groups and organisations are also invited to share updates, helping to build a fuller picture of community life across Blunsdon. We encourage all residents to attend, whether to listen, contribute, or simply gain a better understanding of how parish matters are managed. Your participation helps ensure that the decisions and direction of the parish continue to reflect the needs and aspirations of the community we serve.

Borough Ward Changes for Blunsdon

From May 2026, the way Blunsdon is represented at Swindon Borough Council will change. As part of a borough-wide boundary review, Blunsdon will become its own **single-member ward**, meaning residents will elect **one dedicated borough councillor** instead of sharing three councillors across the larger Blunsdon & Highworth ward. This change has been made to ensure fair and balanced representation across Swindon, with each ward having a similar number of voters.

For residents, this means your borough councillor will focus solely on Blunsdon, giving the village more direct and dedicated representation at the borough level. These changes will come into effect for the **May 2026 local elections**, when all borough councillors across Swindon will stand for election under the new ward boundaries.

Don't forget – you'll need Photo ID to vote

A reminder to all residents that you must show an accepted form of Photo ID when voting at a polling station in the upcoming local elections. This is a national requirement under the UK Government's voter ID rules. Accepted forms include a passport, driving licence, Blue Badge, OAP bus pass.

Speed watch Update – April 2026

Date	Location	Vehicles Counted	Exceeding Limit	Maximum Speed mph	Speed Limit	Start	Finish	Area
3/10/2026	High St	180	18	32	20	15:55	16:55	Heart in Hand
3/11/2026	Ermin St	136	6	40	30	15:30	16:00	Minerva Heights
3/13/2026	Sams Lane	67	22	33	20	15:00	16:00	Junction with High St
3/16/2026	Ermin St	140	4	46	30	9:55	10:55	Minerva Heights
3/17/2026	High St	239	22	31	20	16:00	17:00	Heart in Hand
3/18/2026	High St	142	13	30	20	8:00	9:00	Heart in Hand
3/19/2026	Broadbush	90	4	38	30	9:45	10:12	The Shrubbery
3/23/2026	Ermin St	524	2	39	30	8:00	9:00	Minerva Heights
3/26/2026	Lady Lane	119	11	43	30	9:45	10:30	Cycle Track
4/7/2026	High St	93	9	32	20	16:00	17:00	Heart in Hand
4/8/2026	High St	156	14	33	20	16:00	17:00	Heart in Hand
4/9/2026	Broadbush	248	4	40	30	8:20	9:20	The Shrubbery
4/10/2026	Lady Lane	616	4	42	30	16:00	17:00	Cycle Track

Grounds maintenance: April brought a mix of sunshine and rain, and the changing weather has encouraged fast growth across the village. With the growing season now underway, our grounds maintenance programme began in April, including regular grass cutting, strimming and general upkeep in play areas, open spaces and verges, all delivered in line with our maintenance contract. Throughout the winter months, the emptying of all parish-maintained bins continued as usual, helping to keep our shared spaces tidy and welcoming. As the weather warms, this routine work supports a clean, safe and well-kept environment for everyone to enjoy.

Resident Reminder: Please Maintain Vegetation Overhanging Public Footpaths: Residents are kindly reminded that it is your responsibility to maintain any hedges, trees, shrubs, or other vegetation that grows from your property onto a public footpath, road, or highway. To help keep our community safe and accessible, please ensure that:

- Hedges and shrubs are cut back to your boundary
- Footpaths remain clear and fully passable
- Any low-hanging branches are trimmed to a safe height

Thank you for helping to keep our village tidy, safe, and welcoming for everyone.

Staff Update – Welcoming Kate

We are pleased to welcome Kate, who joined us in April as our new Responsible Finance Officer (RFO). The RFO plays a vital role in the parish council's operations, overseeing the council's financial management, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, preparing financial reports, supporting budget setting, and maintaining the transparency and accuracy of our accounts throughout the year.

Kate has joined us at an excellent time, right at the start of the new financial year, allowing her to become fully involved in planning, monitoring, and shaping the council's financial processes from the outset. Over the coming months, she will be working closely with councillors and staff as she settles into the role. We will share a fuller introduction to Kate later in the year, but in the meantime, we are delighted to have her on board and look forward to the expertise and energy she brings to the team.

Meet Your Councillor / Staff Member

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

Meet Claire – Assistant Clerk

Claire joined the Parish Council in December 2024 as our part-time Assistant Clerk. It's a role with plenty of variety, and no two days are ever quite the same. As someone who is new to parish councils and their structures, Claire has quickly come to appreciate the time and commitment that councillors volunteer for the benefit of the community.

Her connection to Blunsdon: Although she isn't a village resident, Claire takes great pride in helping keep the community informed. She particularly enjoys the strong sense of togetherness in Blunsdon — from local groups and events to the fundraising and neighbourly support that residents offer one another.

What Claire supports: With a strong background in administration, Claire enjoys being the first point of contact for many of the enquiries that come into the Parish Council. Her work covers a wide range of areas, including:

- Managing bookings for parish facilities
- Preparing minutes of meetings
- Assisting with burial enquiries
- Helping residents with issues around the parish
- Supporting communication between the Parish Council and the community

A few words about Claire: Outside of work, Claire loves gardening and spending time with her family. She brings that same calm, steady enthusiasm into her role with the Parish Council.

Parish Council Elections –

On **7 May 2026**, residents will take part in the next scheduled **Parish Council elections**, held as part of the national local government election cycle. On this date, all seats on Blunston Parish Council will be open for election, giving parishioners the opportunity to choose their representatives for the next four-year term. Polling stations will be open throughout the day, and those registered to vote will be able to cast their ballot for the candidates standing in their ward. This election marks an important moment in the parish calendar, ensuring that the council continues to reflect the priorities, voices, and aspirations of the community it serves.

Dates for Your Diary

As we move further into spring, May brings a number of key meetings and events across the parish. The following dates provide a quick overview of what's scheduled for the month ahead.

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

Blunston's Annual Parish Council Meeting will be on 11th May at 7.30 pm

Blunston's Annual Parish Meeting will be on Thursday 21st May 7.30 pm

As we move further into spring, May brings a number of key meetings:

4 May : Early May Bank Holiday

9 May : Ward Surgery – 11:30am, *Village Shop*

25 May : Spring Bank Holiday

Did You Know?

In May 2011, Blunston officially became a separate civil parish, following the community governance review that divided the former parish of "Blunston St Andrew" into two:

- St Andrews Parish (the urban area)
- Blunston Parish (the village and rural area)

This change strengthened local representation and gave Blunston its own dedicated parish council, shaping the governance structure the village still uses today.