

HITCHAM & TAPLOW SOCIETY

Executive Committee Meeting – VGP wrap-up Larkspur House, Mill Lane Thursday 25th June 2026 7.30pm

MINUTES

Present:

Mike Turner
Jacqueline Turner
Rupert Sellers
Andrew Findlay
Jane Curry
Roger Worthington
Charlie Greeves

Apologies:

Cat Howard
Jonathan Specktor

This was a limited, single-item agenda meeting to wrap up the Village Green Party (VGP).

1) Village Green Party (VGP) June 20th 2026 - 40th anniversary

- a) Glorious night with stable forecast several days in advance.
- b) Fire lit at 05:20; meat put on spit on village green.; meat started cooking at 5:50; off at 17:00.
Good selection though less rare than usual. All went; no seconds.
- c) Attendance - Pre-sales = 246; On the night = 57; Total = 303 (336 last year).
- d) Income:
 - i) Pre-sales = £1682; On the night = £344 (card) + £283 (cash). Grand total £2309. £269.80 loss. (2025 made £455 profit)
 - ii) This year: no seconds sales (2025 – 38@£3=£114), extra £150 for first aider, 33 fewer tickets (~£230)
 - iii) Children pay same as adults
- e) Meat & vegetarian / vegan alternative
 - i) AF ordered meat from A&B Butchers (now Tom Hixson Butchers). 58Kg top and rump ordered and received. Feeling that greater ratio of bone to meat this year. Cost £696 at £12 / Kg. Good selection of beef available for attendees – less rare than usual. Very little left over so no seconds. Tom Hixson will **not** put beef on the spit for us – see later.
 - ii) Got 100 beef burgers @ £1.59 each, for £159.00 – 25 left! People wanted beef!
 - iii) Got 180 pork sausages @ £11.95 for 18-pack saus, for £119.50 – 80 left! People wanted beef!
 - iv) Total meat costs £974.50, paid 23/6/2026. Meat costs last year were £720.78 for beef top & rump, £127.20 for 80 burgers and £64.56 for 150 sausages – grand total £912.54.
 - v) Thanks to Cliff at Taplow Court (TC) for receiving the meat on Friday and storing it in the TC kitchen fridge. Also for delivering wood on Friday afternoon and barbecues on Saturday.
 - vi) Used 300 out of 384 rolls. Some from Sainsbury 156 @ £25 and 228 from Costco @ £45.
 - vii) Portabello mushrooms from Sainsbury sprinkled with jarlsberg cheese as veggie option; vegan option is without cheese. 48 mushrooms last year – 60 mushrooms this year; sold 15. Costs £20 for mushrooms, cheese £14. Feeling that mushroom option not well-enough publicised.
- f) New oil drum barbecues worked very well. Start with burn-in-bag bags and then add charcoal. Started at 17:00-17:15. Ready to cook 30 minutes after starting barbecues.
- g) Started serving at 18:30 – about right.
- h) Portion control: more generous this year. Much appreciated.

- i) Water bought for event but not well publicised. **Next year keep at sales tent.**
- j) 6 bottles of Prosecco and beers at carving desk for helpers. WhatsApp to publicise. To helpers?
- k) Rubbish bins seemed to work well.
- l) First Aid - Charlie found Jenna (a Scout leader) who charged £150. Worked very well. Prepared to do it again. She is a physio for Phoenix rugby club.
- m) Cat managed the rota for the day and the clear-up team. Worked well this year.
- n) 2 new volunteers – Caroline & Paul Worthington.
- o) Band - Paid £750 for band & caller (£750 in 2025); Mike arranged cash. Bob (on box) and Mike Sanderson were both unable to play but came anyway. If they ever decide to give up, JC & AF have lots of contacts for folk bands and callers.
- p) Raffle – Alexander Devine Hospital - very happy. Made £1200. Very well organised.
- q) Mark Boden back to do the electrics.
- r) Fire monitor – Nigel Smales was fire monitor. Put fire out with watering can. Rope barrier worked well but allowed very small child to run underneath – perhaps a lower rope strand?
- s) Knife sharpening – Mike sharpened the knives – excellent job.
- t) Posters put up in 2 batches; some in May and some start of June. All lasted reasonably well. See end for list of locations.
- u) Muslin cloth for covering meat -
- v) PA worked reasonably well for caller (Alan) but other people (Rupert & Alexander Devine man) difficult to hear
- w) Jonathan suggested we need tongs to lift logs – no - just wont work. Use a log as a poker.
- x) AF red-handled pliers in box in barn?
- y) Rupert got ice from Majestic for big ice box at 14:00. Need to get earlier – morning.
- z) TC kitchens close at 14:30 – could get much earlier once ice in igloo box
- aa)

2) Village Green Party (VGP) 2027 – suggestions for next year

- a) Research other butchers who will put meat on spit and deliver – April timeframe:
 - i) Castle Meats?
- b) Reduce number of sausages. Reduce number of burgers.
- c) Andrew & Jane do not pass the “bus test” when it comes to erecting the spit on the village green and for getting beef on spit:
 - i) Need a “training session” at least for erecting spit – spring 2027.
- d) Ensure wirecutters available all day and soft galvanised garden wire.
- e) Ensure knives sharpened before event – Mike did super job.
- f) Ensure tickets say “non-refundable” and stress that ticket includes whole event not just meat.
- g) Let band and charity partner and first aider know that they get free food (officially, as not made clear previously) and ensure they do actually get food tokens.
- h) Should we have an article in the Newsletter explaining that the fee is for more than the meat – a feeling that quite a lot didn’t pay for everyone in their party.
- i) Should we put the price up? £8 / £10 and £12 on the night.
- j) Keep beef weight the same – going bigger would cause problems with cooking on cool days
- k) Rupert to ask Mike Sanderson (band) about next year (**soon**). A&J have other options but need lots of notice. Also ask Mike if Alan (caller) would continue.
- l) Shouldn’t use Alexander Devine Hospital next year – Thames Valley Hospice? Keep ADH on list.
- m) Light over sales table – led?
- n) Check availability of hosepipe
- o) Check mike usage for Rupert and raffle – ask caller when they setup, to test others
- p) Publicise rota to all helpers so folk know who is taking over from them and when.
- q) VGP 2027 WhatsApp group?
- r) Replace halogen lights with led lights – capital item. Warm white 2700K.
- s) Get barbecue scourers for cleaning TC big barbecues
- t) Rope barrier round fire – extra lower rope strand to keep small children out.
- u) Mark Boden – wire cutters wanted.

v) Order same quality posters – worked well in 2026.

w) **Next year, read last year's minutes!**

3) Huge thanks to everyone for their efforts.

Meeting closed at 9:15 pm. Next meeting 17th September, 7:30 Larkspur House. Many thanks to Jacqueline & Mike for wine and nuts.

SIGNED:.....

Ox Roast Progress

Target

Well Done	Medium	Med Rare	Rare
75			
70			
65			
60			
55			
50			
45			
40			
35			
30			
25			
20			
15			
10			
5			

Please take the temperature in the thickest part of the meat. Leave the probe in for a minute or two: it responds slowly.

Fire lift at: 05:20
Meat on at: 05:50 23°C

Keep the fire going well and don't worry if the outside of the meat looks black: there will be plenty of rare meat in the middle.

books black: Off at 17:00

Good selection of meat though
less rare
All went - no seconds

We need to get the bulk of the meat up to at least 60C by 18:00

Locations for Posters

(25) = 2025

(26) = 2026 - Done on 7/4/26.

- (26) (25) - Buffins - white fence - Hill Farm Road
- (26) (26) (25) - Village Green x2 - Trees x2
- (25) - " - "
- (26) (25) - Station Road - Telegraph pole, nr. Institute Road
- (26) (25) - Rectory Road - Telegraph pole, nr. Cedar Chase
- (26) (25) - Boundary Road Farm, (nr. Schridlers).
- (26) (25) - top of Mill Lane - style
- (26) (25) - Weir - Mill Lane - Boardwalk - Iron Railings Gate x2
- (25) - " - "
- (26) (25) - Berry Hill - 'Toplow Village' White Gate (near A4)
- (26) (25) - Lake House Cafe - Telegraph pole
- (26) (25) - Lake House - Fence by bridge (Tubilee)
- (25) - ~~River~~ Lower Mill Lane - opposite H&W pub.
- (26) (25) - Wood bridge (Tubilee) near Bkly Homes
- (26) (25) - Bath Road, nr. Ellington Road
- (26) (25) - River Road / Ellington Rd - White Gate (use big + small poster)
- (26) (25) - Ellington Gdns - Our Street Sign
- Bkly Homes Park - Tree on path (near us)

TOTAL 18