

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Present:**

Keith Hickson	(KH)	Chair
Geoff Webster	(GW)	Vice-Chair
Jim Coleman	(JC)	Councillor
Joe Deane	(JD)	Councillor
Sandra Cosier	(SC)	Councillor
Robin Morley	(RM)	Councillor
Trudi Gasser	(TG)	Parish Clerk

**In Attendance:**

13 Members of the public  
 Dan Levy (DL) County Councillor  
 Steve Cosier (SCo) District Councillor

**The Chairman welcomed the new councillor, Robin Morley, to the Parish Council**

MIN REF	ITEM
25/032	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> None received.
25/033	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> No Declarations made.
25/034	<b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b> Minutes Parish Council Meeting of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2025 were approved for publication.
25/035	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b> The Solar Light had been installed at the Old Guardroom Saplings had been planted on the village green hedge holes
25/036	<b>COUNTY &amp; DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS</b> See attached appendix for full reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dan Levy, County Councillor, OCC.</li> <li>• Steve Cosier, District Councillor, WODC.</li> </ul> <b>DISTRICT COUNCIL</b> SCo – Expressed thanks to Tom and Gary for setting up the Speedwatch scheme.  <b>COUNTY COUNCIL</b> See appendix for report.
25/037	<b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b>  <b>Hedge on the Green</b> – Thanks were expressed to the PC for planting hedge in the gaps on the village green.

	<p><b>Damage Road</b> – Concern was expressed over the erosion of the B4449 between Sutton and the turn to South Leigh. DL suggested that the damage is most probably caused by HGVs. DL and KH to arrange a walk along the road to inspect the damage.</p> <p><b>Cycle Track</b> – An appeal was made to the PC to install a cycle track with a couple of jumps in the village. KH welcomed the request and confirmed that the PC would be happy to help with the possibility of fund via S106/CIL. JC to progress on behalf of the PC and report back with possible/suitable locations.</p> <p><b>Planning Application 24/03277</b> – Will the PC be objecting to the revised application? The PC had not received notification, but TG to contact planning to confirm original objections still stand.</p> <p><b>Dog Show</b> – A request was made for assistance with a Tanoy system at the dog Show during festival week. JD offered to help.</p> <p><b>VAS</b> – Is there an installation date for the VAS in the village? No date confirmed yet, the units have been ordered.</p> <p><b>Cycle track to Eynsham</b> Smiths are about to submit their application for gravel extraction – would it be an opportune time for the PC to contact Smiths to progress a path to Eynsham? It was suggested that the PC could set up a co-ordinated group of neighbouring Parish Councils, District Councillor and County Councillor to progress.</p> <p><b>Daffodils</b> – It was questioned whether the PC would plant any further daffodils in the village, as there are places which would benefit. The PC welcomed the request and would explore further in the autumn.</p>
<b>25/038</b>	<p><b>PLANNING</b></p> <p>No new Applications to report.</p>
<b>25/039</b>	<p><b>ROADS</b></p> <p><b>Speed Signs</b> The VAS had been ordered. They will be installed by OCC.</p> <p><b>Speedwatch</b> There are currently 2 volunteers in the scheme – 3 are required. Thanks were expressed to Tom for managing the Speedwatch scheme.</p> <p>Concern was raised regarding HGVs on the B4449 – DL reported that the OCC are working on an area plan for HGV traffic, but the data is difficult to collect. The public will be consulted on the plan, but it is not yet known when.</p>
<b>25/040</b>	<p><b>PC WEBSITE</b></p> <p>The migration will happen over the next 6 weeks, which will result in a new web</p>

	address, website and email addresses for the PC.
<b>25/041</b>	<b>ANNUAL MEETINGS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual Meeting of the Parish Council – The meeting is to be held before the May Ordinary meeting on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May.</li> <li>2. Annual Parish Meeting – The PC agreed this will be held on 10th May alongside the Village Market The PC agreed the format will be the same as last year with invites to local groups and community enterprises</li> </ol>
<b>25/042</b>	<b>VILLAGE VOICE</b> Copy for next edition: SC volunteered to provide copy for the next issue.
<b>25/043</b>	<b>GUARDROOM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Broadband service is now live – JD to set up passwords and settings</li> <li>• keysafe purchased – to be installed</li> <li>• Clock required – TG to purchase</li> </ul>
<b>25/044</b>	<b>CORRESPONDENCE</b> Traffic – an email was received regarding speeding in the village – most of the issues raised were discussed during the meeting, the email will be answered in full to be published in village voice.  Parking – an email was received regarding inconsiderate parking by users of the village hall. The email was passed to the Village Hall chair, who replied appropriately.  Cycle Track – a letter was received making an appeal for a cycle track in the village. This was discussed during the public session of the meeting (see above)
<b>25/045</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bench on The Leys needs securing to the ground, as it is being moved to create a bridge across the stream.</li> <li>• The bus stops require cleaning</li> <li>• A Village Litter Pick is scheduled for Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April.</li> </ul>
<b>25/046</b>	<b>NEXT MEETING</b> 7.00pm on Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2025 in the Village Hall Followed immediately by: 7.30pm on Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2025 in the Village Hall

Signed .....

Date .....



*A horse and his County Councillor in Stanton Harcourt.*

## **Roads Maintenance**

A large amount of money has been made available by the County Council for road maintenance. You will start to see roads being fixed, now that the weather is improving. Potholes can't be fixed when it is wet. Ideally you won't notice that it is happening – people notice the holes but not fixed roads – but inevitably there will be some temporary delays in some places.

Could I warn you that there is a planned closure of the road from Sutton to Eynsham from 10 to 12 May. I appreciate that will be extremely annoying for Stanton Harcourt residents.

A £7.4m project for surface dressing of roads, ie fixing the whole surface rather than just the holes is underway. We have restored annual cleaning of gullies – this had been reduced to once every four years in the 2021 budget.

The total budget for roads maintenance is £60m. It remains the case that the government has grossly underfunded road maintenance. We have been given £24m this year. The County Council has put additional money into the area, but has to balance that with supporting children's service and adult social care and other key, people-critical work.

## **A40**

The work on the Shores Green junction in Witney has commenced. That will make the eastern Witney junction work in each direction and will also improve cycling access to Witney. You probably won't be surprised to hear that the council's contractors found a Thames Water main that Thames Water didn't have on their maps!

You might have noticed that the traffic lights under the bridge on the way into Witney have already been removed. The team is trying to ensure that there is the minimum disruption during the work.

The new junction will open a different way for people in Stanton Harcourt to get to and from the A40 – and that is why South Leigh has new traffic calming measures, given the probable increased traffic through their village.

The other A40 work, from Eynsham to Wolvercote, is in the planning process and should commence by the end of the year.

### **Local government reorganisation latest.**

The initial response from the Oxfordshire authorities has gone to the Ministry for Communities, Housing and Local Government (MCHLG) government department next week. There will be three options, of differing merits.

1. A whole Oxfordshire Unitary authority
2. Two Unitaries - i) Vale of White Horse/South Oxfordshire,/West Berkshire and ii) WODC/Cherwell/City of Oxford
3. Three Unitaries: i) an enlarged Oxford City (including Eynsham and South Leigh and probably Witney), rump of South and Vale and West Berks iii) rump of WODC and Cherwell.

The government will acknowledge receipt shortly, and confirm that the next input will be required in November, responding to issues that will have been pointed out and giving more detail, to be followed by a decision from MCHLG thereafter.

Option 1 will cause the least disruption to key services and deliver the least financial shock, as well as meeting the criteria set out by government, eg to have new unitaries of at least 500,000 residents. That doesn't mean the government will support it.

West Berkshire have yet to confirm that they want to be part of options 2 and 3 rather than remaining standalone or joining in a reconfigured set of Berkshire authorities.

We do need to make sure that whatever MCHLG decides, there is a role for parish councils embedded in the new arrangements and that decisions are taken at the most local level where they can be.

A set of parishes in South Oxfordshire have written to the Sec of State pointing out that the Greater Oxford idea is unacceptable and that they haven't been consulted. You might choose to do so here. A greater Oxford council would have a massive impact on places included within it, and that would almost certainly include Stanton Harcourt.

### **Thames Water**

The High Court ruled that TW's taking on extra very expensive debt could go ahead, despite the legal efforts of the MP for Witney and Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP). I suspect this attempt to keep Thames Water going rather than accepting that it needs to be put into Special Administration, will not work for long. In the meantime, our bills are going up, and TW continue to spill sewage into our rivers. The councils will continue to put pressure on TW to improve performance. We need adequate infrastructure to support the additional housing the government is insisting on here.

### **Elections**

A reminder that there are elections for the County Council on 1 May, under the new boundaries set out by the Electoral Commission. I will be standing again in Eynsham Division, which covers Cassington, South Leigh, Northmoor, Stanton Harcourt, and Eynsham.

There will also be a district council by-election in the Standlake, Aston and Stanton Harcourt ward, following the resignation of the new MP for Witney, Charlie Maynard.

### **And finally**

As this will be my last report before the election, can I take the opportunity to thank all the members of this council, past and present, for their work over the past 4 years.

As ever, I can be contacted at [dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

**Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Councils Collaborate on Two-Unitary Proposal for Oxfordshire's Future**

Cherwell District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council have joined forces to explore a more effective and locally focused approach to local government in Oxfordshire. In response to the Government's call for an interim plan on local government reorganisation, the two councils have submitted a joint letter outlining their commitment to developing a two- unitary model for the county.

Under this proposal, the north of Oxfordshire—comprising Cherwell, Oxford City, and West Oxfordshire—would form one unitary authority. Meanwhile, the south—South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, and the existing West Berkshire unitary council—would come together to create a second authority, provisionally named “Ridgeway Council.”

The two-unitary model aims to strike the right balance between financial efficiency and strong local decision-making. Crucially, it would avoid the high costs and disruption that come with dismantling existing services. Instead, the model builds on the current upper-tier structures already in place, helping ensure continuity in essential services such as social care, education, and highways.

Leaders from both councils have emphasised the importance of preserving local identity while delivering high-quality services. They believe that this model enables more responsive governance, stronger community representation, and supports sustainable growth in the right areas.

While alternative models—including a single county-wide unitary and a three-unitary approach—are also being considered by other councils, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire are confident that a two-unitary structure offers a compelling and practical path forward. The councils are committed to further collaboration and transparent evaluation of all options as the process continues.

For now, no immediate changes are being made. Services will continue as usual while the proposals are refined and submitted for final consideration by the Government later this year.

**What's Happening with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in West Oxfordshire?**

West Oxfordshire District Council is moving ahead with plans to introduce a **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**—a tool that helps ensure new developments contribute to the essential infrastructure our growing communities need.

**What is CIL?**

CIL is a charge that developers will pay when they build new homes or commercial spaces. The money raised will go toward funding important local services like:

- Roads and transport
- Schools
- Community centres
- Other public infrastructure

This ensures that as our towns and villages grow, the services residents rely on grow with them.

**How is this different from Section 106 agreements?**

CIL **does not replace** Section 106 developer contributions. Instead:

- **Section 106** applies to larger developments and pays for specific, local infrastructure needs.
- **CIL** can be used more widely, including for smaller developments, and offers more flexibility to fund projects that benefit the wider community.

**Where are we in the process?**

The Council recently completed a public consultation on its **Draft Charging Schedule**—a document that outlines how much developers would be required to pay under CIL. After reviewing community feedback and making a few clarifications, the schedule has now been submitted for **independent examination**.

**What's the examination?**

- An independent Examiner, Mr. Holland from Intelligent Plans and Examination (IPe) has been appointed to review the proposed charges and the evidence behind them.
- An impartial Programme Officer will manage the process and act as the main point of contact for anyone who submitted feedback.
- The Examiner will not speak directly with the Council or individuals during this stage— all communication goes through the Programme Officer to ensure a fair process.

**How can residents stay informed?**

All updates, including hearing dates and new documents, will be posted on the **CIL Examination webpage** hosted by the Council. The **Latest News and Updates** section is the best place to stay up to date as the examination progresses.

Happy to discuss anything raised in my report. Best wishes

Councillor Steve Cosier District Councillor SASH