

Long Wittenham Parish Council meeting held on 17th July 2025

Present: Chairman Liz Yuille, Cllr Steve Bolton, Cllr Ian Burton, Cllr David Corney, Cllr Peter Rose, RFO Clifford Bosley.

In attendance: Martin Elliff (clerk) and two members of the public.

Chairman Yuille welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2025/122 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Steve Brown, Cllr Mark Thompson, District Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye, County Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith.

2025/123 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Cllrs Bolton and Burton declare their interest in Long Wittenham Athletic Club and Cllr Bolton in planning application P25/S1636/FUL.

2025/124 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- Resident Ann Tomline was present to raise three issues:
 1. The entrance to her property floods in heavy rain.
 2. The surface of the road to Clifton Hampden is dangerous and needs to be resurfaced.
 3. Many of the footpaths in the village are very uneven and are dangerous to residents with mobility problems.She has raised all three issues with OCC through Fix My Street and direct requests to no effect. It was agreed that the PC should write to our new County Councillor asking him to champion these issues on Mrs Tomline's behalf.
- Resident Julian Gitsham had emailed asking the council about two issues that he has with Long Wittenham Athletic Club (LWAC): the playbus which is parked there and a floodlight that shines directly into his property. Mr Gitsham had raised the problem of the playbus last September and the council had been informed that the club had written to Mr Gitsham offering solutions to ameliorate his concerns. The club has discussed this again with Mr Gitsham and has agreed to ensure that the spotlight does not cause any problems. The club has invited councillors to visit the club to see the issues for themselves.
- Cllr Burton had been approached by a resident complaining about the hedge at 6 Saxons Heath which is overhanging the footpath. It was agreed that the council should write to the householders asking them to cut it back.
- Cllr Burton had been contacted by the householders at 12 Saxons Heath asking if the Council could ask the school bus company to warn the driver of the bus that the low level wall to the property is being damaged. It was agreed that the council should write to the school bus company.

Actions:	Chairman to write to our County Councillor asking for help with Mrs Tomline's issues. Chairman and Cllr Corney to visit LWAC to better understand the issues surrounding the playbus and floodlight. Clerk to write to the school bus company asking them to avoid damaging the wall at 12 Saxons Heath.
-----------------	---

2025/125 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Parish Council resolved to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2025.



2025/126 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

- The clerk had written to OCC Highways, HML and Elivia about the lack of maintenance on the hedge at the corner of Didcot Road and Fieldside. OCC had responded that they could not do anything unless it was a safety issue. The chairman confirmed that currently, it is not. No response has been received from HML and Elivia.

2025/127 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr Casey-Rerhaye's report for July, sent by email, is attached in appendix A.

2025/128 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Hope-Smith's report for July sent by email, is attached in appendix B.

2025/129 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

P25/S1636/FUL Building east of Hamilton Long Wittenham

- Residents Jane May and Ann Tomline were present to urge the council to object to this application. There were similar representations by email from residents Julian Gitsham and Janette Stephens. It was agreed that there are two material planning considerations that apply in this case:
 1. The location of the proposed wood burner flue which would be very close to the neighbouring thatched roof and present a fire risk.
 2. The gap between the barn and Hamiltons being less than 1 metre.The council agreed to object to the application on these grounds. There are other factors which, although not material planning considerations, the council agreed should be included in the objection response.

Actions: Clerk and chairman to draft the objection response for circulation to the council.

2025/130 COMMUNITY HUB

Cllrs Rose reported that there has been no progress in the negotiations between Robert Weavers' land agent and Pye Homes who may be interested in a revised project. (After the PC meeting Robert Weavers' land agent reported that they have signed a six month exclusivity period with Pye.) There has also been no progress with the planning application as the diocese is proving difficult to communicate with despite numerous attempts by our solicitor.

2025/131 ACKLINGS PLAYGROUND

The playground was opened on 27th June with approximately 60 people in attendance. It is being well used and reviews are excellent.

Splits in some of the timbers used in the equipment have been reported to Jupiter.

Cllr Rose is trying to get FCC to pay the balance of the grant but they are raising more obstacles.

We have three quotations for the replacement of the Woodland Adventure Site fence. Two picnic tables have been ordered and its is hoped they will be installed next week. These items will come out of the £5,000 contingency.

Cllr Bolton asked if anything in particular should be checked when performing the weekly playground inspections. Cllr Yuille said that she has received documents from Jupiter which should contain this information and she will circulate it shortly.

2025/132 LONG WITTENHAM TO CLIFTON HAMPDEN PERMISSIVE PATH

Cllr Corney met with ODS and they will be quoting for the improvement of the verge from Lower Farm to the gate to the path on the Buxton Land. We already have a

quote from Drayton Construction. Once we have both quotes, it will be possible to apply for grants. OCC have given permission for the work to be done.

2025/133 HIGH STREET CHICANES / SIDs

Cllr Corney had circulated a revised consultation leaflet incorporating details of the proposed SIDs but no decision had been made about how the results of the consultation would be interpreted. It was suggested that the leaflet be used as the basis for a post on the website asking for comments from residents. These can be used to determine the next steps. Agreed.

Actions: Clerk and chairman to draft website post for circulation before posting.

2025/134 GRANT APPLICATION – PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The application for £1,000 for outdoor equipment at the school had been circulated before the meeting. Approved.

2025/135 PARISH CLERK / RFO RECRUITMENT

It had been suggested that the process of finding a new clerk/RFO should begin while the current incumbents are content to continue in their posts until a suitable replacement can be found. Approved.

2025/136 PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM

The Project Submission Form had been circulated before the meeting. It was agreed to implement it and review its effectiveness in due course.

2025/137 SODC's COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

SODC's email containing details of its Community Governance Review had been circulated before the meeting. It was suggested that the PC should support the change of name from Parish Council to Community Council.

Actions: Clerk to submit the PC's suggestion to the review.

2025/138 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- Cllr Bolton advised that the Brownies and Rainbows may use the clubhouse at LWAC next year.
 - Cllr Rose reported that Nick Caw, the chairman of the Village Hall Committee (VHC) had raised four queries for the PC to consider:
 1. How long before the new village will be completed? We do not know owing to the problems with the Community Hub.
 2. Does the existing lease still apply? Yes, we took legal advice and this was confirmed.
 3. Who should pay for any hall maintenance? By the terms of the lease, the VHC is responsible for all maintenance. If financial assistance is needed, they can apply to the PC for a grant.
 4. How should the hall be managed? By the terms of the lease, the hall should be managed by the VHC, composed of 5 residents elected each year at an AGM and 7 representatives of the users of the hall, including the PC. Hannah Fraser-Mackenzie the Office Manager of the Pre-School, is keen to be involved.
- It was agreed that Nick should call a meeting of the hall users as soon as possible to elect a new VHC and address any maintenance issues.

Actions: Cllr Rose to write to Nick Caw advising him of the PC's discussion.

Long Wittenham Parish Council meeting held on 17th July 2025

2025/139 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS

Cllr Bolton asked about the swings at Bodkins. Following RoSPA's annual inspection this week, the PC was advised that the wooden supports are now so rotten that they have been graded "High Risk". It was agreed that the swings should be removed as soon as possible and that the clerk should contact Creative Play to provide a quotation for repair and/or replacement.

Actions: Cllrs Bolton and Burton to take down the swings at Bodkins.
Clerk to contact Creative play and ask for a quotation for the repair or replacement of the swings..

2025/140 FINANCIAL REPORT

- 2025-26 1st Quarter Accounts
The RFO had circulated the 1st Quarter Accounts before the meeting. Approved.
- Compliance with the Pensions Regulations
Every 3 years the RFO is required to make a declaration that neither of the employees of the council (clerk & RFO) want a pension. Approved.
- Income during June
10/06/2024 FCC Communities Fund (Acklings Grant Part 2) £14,974.66
- Expenditure during June
02/06/2025 Jupiter Play & Leisure Ltd Inv 21925 (Acklings Upgrade) £20,607.99
02/06/2025 M Rainbow Inv 02.2025 (Bodkins Gatepost) £120.00
05/06/2025 Logs Unlimited Inv 250087 £380.40
05/06/2025 Finch Sand and Ballast Inv 18797 (Acklings Top Soil) £240.00
11/06/2025 Clerk's Salary June 2025 £350.45
23/06/2025 Auditing Solutions Ltd Inv A9050 £510.00
17/06/2025 Bank Service Charge £4.25
26/06/2025 Brown Expenses (Acklings Upgrade) £1,019.97
26/06/2025 Clear Councils Inv LCO01596 (Acklings Upgrade) £48.06
June Expenditure Total £23,281.12

Meeting Closed at 8:50pm.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 18th September 2025

Signed:



Date:

18 / 9 / 25.

APPENDIX A

District Councillor Report July 2025

Local government Reorganisation

All 3 options for Local Government Reorganisation are now being promoted by their proponents, with engagement now under way.

SODC have launched public engagement for their two-unitary council proposal, via **twocouncils.org** as well as printed materials and events. At the time of writing, the council have had over 1,346 responses to the survey, which runs until 16 July.

The SODC proposal, supported by all 4 rural districts, seeks to create two brand new unitary councils that cover the following areas:

- **Oxford City, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Council**(created from the existing district councils of Cherwell, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire)
- **Ridgeway Council**(created from the existing district councils of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse and the unitary council of West Berkshire).

Oxford City Council's "Greater Oxford" proposal

In contrast, Oxford City Council have launched their alternative '**Greater Oxford**' proposal to considerable publicity. This would mean most of the villages in the green belt, such as Dorchester, becoming part of a new 'Greater Oxford' council. Their pitch for this is at <https://greateroxford.org>. It does not meet the government's stated criteria for size and it's unclear how some services would be provided. The city's online survey can be found on Oxford City Council's engagement portal.

The city council is holding public drop-in events in our area – including one in Berinsfield. We're trying to spread the word to ensure everyone is aware of the proposal and so the city council gets lots of engagement.

- The Berin Centre in Berinsfield between 10am and 1pm on 16 July

Also, Berro Lounge in Didcot between 4pm and 7pm on 29 July

Meanwhile, the County Council is pitching an all-Oxfordshire version which would be on the existing county boundaries. They have launched their engagement at <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation>

The timeline for decisions:

Friday 21 March, 2025- local councils were asked to submit initial proposals to the Government so they could comment on them to help build the final proposals

Spring/Summer 2025- further development work on the proposals along with a programme of communication and engagement to ensure local voices and community needs are reflected in the proposal

Friday 28 November, 2025- the deadline for final proposals to be submitted to the Government

Spring 2026- It is expected the government will make their decision on which structure will be put in place for Oxfordshire. We have not been given a date yet.

Changes to Government Neighbourhood Planning Support

The Government has confirmed it will no longer provide national grant funding or technical support packages for neighbourhood planning groups beyond 2025. This change means that community groups will no longer be able to access funding or specialist advice through the national provider, Locality.

Despite these national changes, **South Oxfordshire District Council remains committed to supporting neighbourhood planning**, with a dedicated in-house team which will continue to provide expert advice and guidance to neighbourhood planning groups. More info on the council website.

Performing Arts grant coming soon



A new round of the £60,000 Performing Arts grant scheme will open for applications on 28 July. The scheme supports voluntary and community performing arts organisations in South Oxfordshire, who will be able to apply for up to £5,000 in funding for projects that improve community wellbeing across the district.

The council are holding a **funding advice event** at Cornerstone Arts Centre from 4pm – 6pm on *Wednesday 9 July*. There are limited spaces available, and places must be booked in advance – **please register here**.

SODC Capital Grant Scheme open for applications up to £75,000 until 25th July.

Organisations eligible to apply are:

- Town and parish councils
- Non-profit businesses and Community Interest Companies
- Community-based organisations

More information can be found about all grants at southoxon.gov.uk/grants

Supporting Culture & the Arts

Last week, we hosted a successful Heritage Network event at the Abbey Buildings in Abingdon – launched to help local arts, culture and heritage to thrive, linking the groups and organisations who need support with those who have the ability to provide it. Around 30 representatives from local museums, cultural organisations, and heritage sites across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse attended. We hope this will become a regular event.

They heard from key organisations like The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Oxfordshire County Council, Museums Development Trust and Arts Council England about funding and future plans across the districts. This event was a great opportunity for the sector and council representatives to make new connections helping the heritage community find access to the support they need in both districts.

Improvements for Abbey Sports centre

South Oxfordshire District Council has been successful in its bid for government funding of around £1.5m towards installing energy efficiency measures including double glazing and insulation, as well as solar panels and air source heat pumps to replace end-of-life gas boilers at the leisure centres in Berinsfield and Henley.

The owners of the buildings, Oxfordshire County Council, will put in £2m towards the improvements, while the district council will fund a further £2.8m from developer contributions. All work should be finished by the end of March 2028.

Email: Sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk

APPENDIX B

County Councillor Report July 2025

1. FROM LAST MONTH - Local Government Reorganization

The County Council has submitted a bid for a single Oxfordshire-wide unitary authority which contrasts with the view of SODC which is working on a proposal for a 'Ridgway Council' comprising South Oxon, Vale of Whitehorse and West Berkshire. Both those proposals are in line with government's white paper on viable options so it will be up to the Secretary of State (Jim McMahon) to choose.

There are pros and cons to each of those, and I support the inclusion of both bids.

There is a 3rd option with a unitary city on expanded boundaries as well as northern and southern unitaries, also including West Berkshire.

For this month Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is initiating resident engagement on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) starting June 2025. This is to raise awareness based on the

Government's White Paper. Residents will be directed to OCC FAQs and dedicated website for more information.

Further detailed discussions will take place between the councils so that final proposals can be submitted by 28 November 2025. The government will then decide what form of unitarisation will take place in Oxfordshire.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/local-government-reorganisation-and-devolution>

This OCC survey is open for comments until 11.59pm on Sunday 27 July 2025

2. Residents without driveways given opportunity to charge electric vehicles at home

Oxfordshire residents without off-street parking can now apply for a scheme that allows them to charge an electric vehicle (EV) outside their own home. The pilot project, delivered by Oxfordshire County Council, will initially benefit 500 residents and is supported by a £700,000 government grant. The scheme aims to accelerate the transition to cleaner, greener electric vehicles by providing affordable and practical EV charging cable channels. These channels allow the cable from a home charger to safely cross the pavement and connect to a kerbside EV without causing a trip hazard.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/energy-and-climate-change/electric-vehicles/ev-cable-channel>

3. Free family day at Oxfordshire's hidden gem

Families from across Oxfordshire can celebrate the start of the summer holidays with fun activities and a taste of local heritage at the Oxfordshire Museum's Family Day on 24 July. The free event will take place at the archaeological site of the Bishop's Palace in Witney from 10am to 4pm. Activities include arts and crafts, and object handling sessions with the council's Finds Liaison Officer. The event is a great opportunity to explore Oxfordshire's rich history in a relaxed and family-friendly setting. More details below

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/museums-and-history/oxfordshire-museum>

4. Oxfordshire secures over £10 million to help bus passengers

Oxfordshire County Council and local bus operators have secured over £10 million in government funding to improve bus services for 2025-26. The funding will support bus priority measures, infrastructure upgrades, and initiatives to make public transport more accessible and reliable. Improvements include smart traffic signals, dedicated bus lanes, real-time passenger information displays, and vehicle improvement grants. The funding will also support the continuation of key bus routes and the introduction of new services.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshire-secures-over-10-million-to-help-bus-passengers/>

5. Rural connectivity enhanced for nearly 200 public sites in Oxfordshire

The GigaHubs project has been completed, enhancing digital connectivity at 192 public service and local authority sites across Oxfordshire. The project, jointly funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the council, has introduced gigabit-capable broadband at schools, GP practices, fire stations, libraries, leisure centres, community centres, and museums. This initiative supports the council's goals of reducing carbon emissions, promoting digital inclusion, and fostering community engagement.

<https://digitalinfrastructureoxfordshire.co.uk/>

6. 100 up! Solar panels scheme reaches landmark figure

A trial scheme to make it more affordable for Oxfordshire residents to install solar panels and battery storage has reached its 100th installation. The Energy Saver App project, backed by government funding, allows householders to pay £40 a month for the equipment instead of paying thousands upfront. The scheme has generated significant clean electricity and savings for participants. Residents can still register their interest in the scheme through the Energy Saver App.

<https://energysaverapp.com/>

7. Make your voice heard on shaping recycling centres

Oxfordshire residents are invited to share their views on the county's household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) through a survey hosted on Let's Talk Oxfordshire until 11 August. The council is consulting on potential changes to waste acceptance policies and the van and trailer permit scheme. Feedback will help shape the future strategy for dealing with household waste. Residents can request a paper copy of the survey by emailing waste.management@oxfordshire.gov.uk or calling the council's customer services team.

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/hwrc-consultation>

8. Road marking work in progress after first phase of major highway maintenance programme completed

The first phase of Oxfordshire County Council's £7.4 million surface dressing programme has been completed on schedule. The next stage involves repainting road lines and installing reflective road studs. The second phase will take place from 30 August to 8 September. The programme aims to extend the service life of roads by sealing the surface to keep out water, a major cause of deterioration and potholes. More details of plans are on the link below

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/roadworks/planned-road-maintenance>

9. FROM LAST MONTH - REMINDER - Oxford Congestion Charge Consultation

OCC approved a 6-week public consultation on a proposed £5 congestion charge for several roads in Oxford. The consultation has begun on Monday, June 23.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/connecting-oxfordshire/temporary-congestion-charge>

This is in advance of the traffic filters which has been delayed due to the Botley road reopening delay to 2026

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/connecting-oxfordshire/oxford-traffic-filters/how-they-will-work>

Email: Johnny.Hope-Smith@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

