

Long Wittenham Parish Council meeting held on 16th October 2025

Present: Chairman Liz Yuille, Cllr Ian Burton, Cllr Mark Thompson, RFO Clifford Bosley, District Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye.

In attendance: Martin Elliff (clerk) and 1 member of the public.

Chairman Yuille welcomed everyone to the meeting and suggested that, with so many councillors absent, the council was only just quorate and any significant decisions should be deferred to the meeting in November. Agreed.

2025/162 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Steve Brown, Cllr Steve Bolton, Cllr David Corney, County Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith.

2025/163 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

2025/164 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- Resident Jim Brown had asked if the footpath next to Wards Field could be cleared. Cllr Burton, the village footpath warden, said that he had already reported this to the OCC Countryside Access officers but would report it again.

2025/165 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Parish Council resolved to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2025.

2025/166 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None.

2025/167 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

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

2025/168 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

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

2025/169 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

P25/S3007/DIS	Land at Lady Grove Didcot	NRR
P25/S3023/DIS	Land at Lady Grove Didcot	NRR

A minor amendment to planning application P25/S1636/FUL (Building east of Hamilton, Northfield Lane) was received on 14th October. The council agreed to confirm its original objection.

Actions: Clerk to confirm the council's objection to planning application. P25/S1636/FUL.

2025/170 COMMUNITY HUB

Cllr Brown had circulated a summary of the meeting with Pye Homes on 30th September by email – see appendix C. An on-site meeting with OCC Highways and Pye Homes is scheduled for 31st October.

2025/171 ACKLINGS PLAYGROUND

Cllrs Brown and Bolton had circulated a summary of the issues regarding the planting of trees. In their absence it was agreed to defer discussion to the next meeting.



2025/172 LONG WITTENHAM TO CLIFTON HAMPDEN PERMISSIVE PATH

Cllr Thompson said that seven contractors have now been approached to quote for the work for the improvement of the verge from Lower Farm to the Buxton land, but only one quotation has so far been received.

2025/173 NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Cllr Thompson reported that he and Cllr Corney have started work on the update. A lot of revision is required, particularly to maps and statistics. A draft revised plan will be presented as soon as available.

2025/174 COUNCIL VACANCY

SODC has confirmed that the post can be filled by co-option. No-one has come forward to fill the post so it was agreed to advertise the vacancy on the village website and noticeboards.

Actions: Clerk to post council vacancy on the village website and noticeboards.

2025/175 PARISH CLERK / RFO RECRUITMENT

Cllr Yuille has been in contact with a potential RFO. She is well qualified but would require a salary more than twice that paid to the current RFO. She also does not see any merit in attending the monthly PC meeting. It was agreed to advertise for someone to cover both roles as this will likely be a better fit for the council.

Actions: Clerk and chairman to advertise for a clerk/RFO in the OALC newsletter.

2025/176 REMEMBRANCE DAY

The chairman will represent the council at the War Memorial on 11th November. Prew Bowtell, the village's Poppy Appeal Organiser, has ordered the council wreath. Cost £28.50. It was agreed to add a donation of £21.50.

2025/177 PLAYGROUNDS MAINTENANCE

Discussion of the minor maintenance required at the village playgrounds was deferred to the next meeting.

2025/178 ABINGDON RESERVOIR

Resident Steve Humphries, a senior engineer with Thames Water was present to provide background to the project. With many councillors absent, a decision on the council's position on the project was deferred to the next meeting.

2025/179 2026 PC MEETING DATES

The PC meeting dates for 2026 (third Thursday of each month except August) had been circulated before the meeting. Approved. The chairman urged councillors to prioritise the dates in their diaries and make every effort to attend meetings.

2025/180 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

None.

2025/181 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS

None.



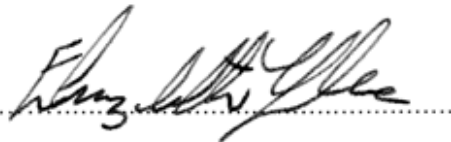
2025/182 FINANCIAL REPORT

- 2024-25 External Auditor's Report
The RFO had circulated the report in August. Approved.
- 2025-26 Half Year Accounts
The RFO had circulated the accounts before the meeting. Approved.
- Income during September
04/09/2025 SODC Precept 2nd Payment £12,947.00
- Expenditure during September
02/09/2025 Logs Unlimited Inv 250262 £380.40
11/09/2025 Clerk's Salary September 2025 £405.40
19/09/2025 Bank Service Charge £4.25
23/09/2025 Clear Councils Inv LCO01596 (Insurance) £883.49
September Expenditure Total £1,673.54

Meeting Closed at 8:40pm.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 20th November 2025

Signed:



Date:

20/11/25.

APPENDIX A

District Councillor Report October 2025

Draft Local Development Plan

The Joint Local Plan has been recommended to be withdrawn by the government inspectors.

Many of you will know that the Council has been working on a new Joint Local Plan with Vale of the White Horse Council. This was submitted to the government Inspectors and there was an inquiry in public last spring.

These inspectors have written to the Council to say that they believe that the 'Duty to Co-operate' with Oxford City has not been fully demonstrated and have recommended the Council withdraws the whole of the Joint Plan. This plan has been in the making for over four years. All councillors received a briefing on the Council's options last week, none of which are very positive in my opinion.

I am deeply disappointed by this response by the Inspectors, and I know many residents will be too, as well as being concerned about the uncertainty in which this leaves the two Districts. Speculative planning applications for houses and industry will likely become more common – as demonstrated by the recent application at Chalgrove.

I am very supportive of the progressive and climate & nature friendly policies in the draft local plan. Oxford City had already had their own plan rejected over their housing needs assessment so this

recommendation from the Inspectors seems bizarre and contradictory to me. The Councils have written back to them after taking legal advice, pointing out errors and inconsistencies, but has not made any decision yet on whether to withdraw the Plan or not.

Cost of living grants

Food and Warmth Grant, previously known as the Household Support Fund, is now open for applications to help residents who are struggling with the cost-of-living pressures. Voluntary and community organisations and town and parish councils can apply to support those who need help this winter. Organisations can apply for up to £2,000 if un-constituted, £2,000–£5,000 if constituted, and up to £10,000 for collaborations between three or more not-for-profit organisations led by a constituted group. The application window **closes at midday on 6 November 2025**. There are more details about the eligibility and how to apply on our website: Food and Warmth Grant Scheme 2025/2026 - Now open - South Oxfordshire District Council

Cornerstone events

Cornerstone Arts Centre invites you to embrace the "eerie" this November with two spine-tingling performances. On Thursday 6 November, experience Nosferatu on their big screen, as composer Chris Green brings Murnau's 1922 vampire classic to life with a haunting mix of live electronics and acoustic sounds.

Then, on Wednesday 12 November, Bark Barkblends puppetry, cameras, and diorama sets to tell a darkly funny, unsettling story from a dog's point of view. From acclaimed live-cinema company Buzzcut Productions (from Oxford), this Edinburgh Fringe hit is a 'must-see' (and I have already booked!)

Garden Waste Bins

Residents who have purchased a permit for the council brown bin garden waste collection service in South Oxfordshire or the Vale of White Horse can have extra garden waste collected for free, on their normal scheduled collection day only, between 27 October and 7 November.

Please use, as a maximum, the standard sized (60L) black refuse-style sacks or boxes / containers which combined total no more than a standard bin full.

Bags and containers should be left open so crews can easily empty them into the rear of the vehicle and be able to check there are not contaminants

All the garden waste collected will be taken to a facility near Wallingford where it is composted. The compost is then sold on to local farmers for use on their farmland as a soil conditioner. The new permit system means that 95 per cent of all garden waste customers can now be reached by email, which means the Councils can quickly keep in touch with any known service changes and it saves a huge amount of administrative work to manage the scheme.

Chief Executive change

The CE of the two councils has left the council by mutual agreement and the process of recruiting a new one has started. This will be done slightly differently because the District Councils have only three years left. Meanwhile the councils are being run by the two deputies stepping up into the role and sharing the duties.

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

APPENDIX B

County Councillor Report October 2025

1. Councillor Priority Fund – Supporting Local Projects

The Councillor Priority Fund has reopened, offering each Oxfordshire County Councillor £10,000 to support community projects within their division. This funding is designed to help deliver local priorities and strengthen community initiatives.

Parish councils, community groups, and local organisations are encouraged to apply for funding to support projects that benefit residents. Examples might include:



- Improvements to community facilities
- Local environmental initiatives
- Activities that promote well-being or inclusion
- Smaller-scale projects are especially encouraged, as the fund is modest and intended to support a wide range of communities across Oxfordshire

Key details:

- Applications must be submitted by 30 November **2026**
- Grants are typically paid within 28 days of approval
- Applicants must register for an account to apply and track progress
- Monitoring and reporting are required for successful projects

To ensure your project meets the funding criteria, please read the guidance document before applying.

What parishes can do:

- **Identify local projects that could benefit from modest funding**
- **Collaborate with community groups to develop proposals**
- **Submit applications early to allow time for review and payment**
- **Keep records and be prepared to report on outcomes**

For more information or to apply, visit the Councillor Priority Fund page.

<https://service.oxfordshire.gov.uk/councillorpriorityfund>

2. Free Park and Ride Bus Travel & Temporary Congestion Charge Scheme

Oxfordshire County Council is introducing free park and ride bus travel in Oxford for an initial three-month period starting 29 October 2025, coinciding with the launch of the city's temporary congestion charge.

This initiative allows up to two adults and three children with a valid park and ride parking ticket to **travel free to and from Oxford's park and ride sites**. The offer applies to any Stagecoach or Oxford Bus Company service serving these sites — not just designated park and ride routes.

For example, at Redbridge, parking costs £2.50 for up to 16 hours. Normally, a combined parking + bus ticket would cost £4–£5, so this offer makes the bus travel element completely free when you park

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/free-park-and-ride-bus-travel-with-temporary-congestion-charge/>

The temporary congestion charge is a short-term measure to reduce traffic while Botley Road remains closed, delaying the start of the council's traffic filter trial. It aims to:

- Improve bus services and air quality
- Support local businesses in the lead-up to Christmas
- Make travel easier for those with permits (including carers, traders, and blue badge holders)

The charge applies to six key roads in Oxford, with a £5 daily fee for cars without a permit. However, many permit types are available, and applications can be made online.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/oxfords-temporary-congestion-charge-cars-cars/apply-permit>

3. Common Ground Award – Capital Funding for Community Cohesion Projects

The UK Government has launched the Common Ground Award, a capital grant scheme aimed at strengthening community cohesion through the work of voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations.

Grants of up to £10,000 are available to support projects that bring people together from different backgrounds, including funding for new builds, refurbishments, or essential equipment. In exceptional cases, larger awards may be considered.

Key details:



- Applications open: 13 October 2025
- Deadline: 21 November 2025
- Funding awarded: January 2026
- Projects must commit funding by 31 March 2026
- Total fund: £1.7 million, with a focus on broad geographic and organisational diversity

What parishes can do:

- **Encourage eligible local groups (e.g. charities, CICs, community associations) to apply**
- **Identify facilities or equipment needs that support inclusive community activities**
- **Support applications by offering letters of endorsement or helping with project planning**
- **Promote the opportunity locally, especially to smaller organisations who may benefit from capital investment**

This is a competitive grant, and applications will be assessed on alignment with the fund's goals, community engagement, impact, sustainability, and use of funding. Smaller organisations are especially encouraged to apply, and the process is designed to be proportionate and accessible.

For full details and to apply, visit the Common Ground Award page

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-ground-award-prospectus/common-ground-award-prospectus>

or contact CGA@communities.gov.uk to register interest.

4. INFO - National Recognition for Oxfordshire's Supported Employment Service

Oxfordshire County Council's Oxfordshire Employment service has received national recognition for its work helping people with disabilities, long-term health conditions, and other barriers to employment secure and sustain meaningful work.

The service has successfully renewed its Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF) accreditation, placing it among a select group of organisations nationally recognised for delivering high-quality, inclusive employment support.

Key achievements:

- Significant improvement in six-month job retention, rising from 53% to 80%
- Continued compliance with national standards following a rigorous review
- Strong performance in areas such as vocational profiling, job matching, and in-work support

The SEQF kitemark, awarded by the British Association for Supported Employment (BASE), is the benchmark for quality in supported employment. Oxfordshire Employment's accreditation is valid for three years, with annual reviews to ensure ongoing excellence.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshire-receives-national-recognition-for-work-to-secure-jobs-for-people-with-disabilities-and-health-conditions/>

5. INFO - Improving Mobile Signal – Oxfordshire's Digital Twin Investment

Oxfordshire County Council has committed £500,000 to develop a "digital twin" of the county's mobile phone network — a pioneering project aimed at improving mobile signal for residents and businesses.

The digital twin will allow the council to run "what if" scenarios to test how changes to the network — such as adjusting antenna direction, increasing signal gain, or adding small cells — could improve coverage in areas with poor reception.

The initiative responds to growing concerns that poor mobile coverage is becoming a barrier to daily life and economic activity across Oxfordshire.

Key benefits:

- Identifies areas with weak signal and explores practical solutions
- Helps determine which mobile network offers the best coverage in specific locations
- Supports smarter planning for future infrastructure upgrades



- May reduce costs if other councils join the scheme

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn82yzkm0jyo>

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

APPENDIX C

Community Hub Meeting with Pye Homes 30th September 2025

PC Reps: Cllr Steve Brown, Cllr Liz Yuille and Martin Elliff. Land Owner Rep: Mark Sanders.

This Teams meeting was held so that Pye could update us on their work so far.

They have had meetings with OCC Officers regarding the school design which seem to have been much more helpful than previous meeting between OCC and Thomas Homes. Previously certain design criteria for the school had been "fixed".

It now seems that OCC do have some flexibility to adjust their previous requirements. The following points were discussed:

School update

Possible reduction in site area from 1.34 to 1.06 hectares (this is a big change as it re- moves the "under 16" pitch requirement)

Other potential savings:

Simplifying elevational treatment

Classroom canopies – change from timber to steel

Reduction in roof-lights used in hall

Ceiling to teaching accommodation – could be flat. Potentially flat roof school in its entirety Vehicle build up to playground not necessary

Change footpath treatment from resin bound paving and concrete slab to tarmac Remove bark path and raised tree planters

Potential savings on internal finishes and landscape details

Other stakeholder engagement required – Diocese. I have since written to our previous contact at the Diocese to explain Pye are now working with the PC.

Due to the reduction in land area required for the school Pye are looking at more efficient land use and the possibility of increasing the number of dwellings to better fund the community facilities.

They asked why the Village Hall required so much outside space. The original long term plan was to have sufficient space for events at the VH to be able to expand into a marquee and also space for a MUGA (multi use games area).

They also asked if there was scope to expand the site into the scheduled land for additional green space which was agreed in principle.

Highways access update

JNP Highway Consultants have produced a report suggesting a roundabout was not required at the entrance to the development. This could be a very large cost reduction.

They have suggested that a widened road with a central right turn lane is required. However following discussion of the speed survey they had undertaken (which was taken at the very start of the 20mph zone and probably over estimated speeds) it was agreed to ask them to review their suggestions.

JNP will also look at the junctions along Ladygrove with simple tee junctions that provide access to much larger sites and a bus route.

Helpfully in a separate arrangement our County Councillor had been in touch with Highway Development Control who had offered a site meeting to review plans for the access. This meeting will be held in the last week of October.



Pye asked for the costs included in the current S106 planning agreement. They have been provided with a summary to include in any revised costing for the project. This is likely to be later in November after their Architect has had an opportunity to review the development.

Pye were unaware of the alternative proposal for the current school site. Thomas Homes had designed a single very large dwelling based around the historic part of the school.

However early in the original design process there was the possibility of build 5 or 6 dwellings on the school site behind the new village green. Draft sketch plans have been provided to Pye for information and comparison of costs.

A further update is planned for late November.

Cllr Steve Brown 9th October 2025

