

Long Wittenham Parish Council meeting held on 20th November 2025

Present: Chairman Liz Yuille, Cllr Steve Brown, Cllr Steve Bolton, Cllr Ian Burton, RFO Clifford Bosley, County Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith.

In attendance: Martin Elliff (clerk) and no members of the public.

Chairman Yuille welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2025/183 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Mark Thompson, District Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye.

2025/184 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Cllrs Bolton and Burton declared their interest in Long Wittenham Athletic Club.

2025/185 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

2025/186 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Parish Council resolved to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2025.

2025/187 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None.

2025/188 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

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

2025/189 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

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

2025/190 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

P25/S3059/S73	Earthtrust Between Hill Farm and Sires Hill	NSV
P25/S3383/RM	Land south of Appleford Road Didcot	NSV

2025/191 COMMUNITY HUB

On 1st November Cllr Brown and the Clerk met with OCC Highways and Pye Homes on-site to discuss more simple and cheaper access arrangements to the site.

On 17th November Cllr Brown and the Clerk met with the Pye Project Team, Robert Weavers and his Land Agent at the Pye Offices. The meeting was positive with several suggestions from Pye on how to make the project more viable. Pye has looked at much more efficient land use on the site, partly by changing the bus access arrangements for the school, and will be proposing a scheme with more homes to close the gap between costs and income. The school and village hall remain in more or less the same positions as on previous Thomas Homes plans but may be re-orientated to save space.

An online meeting is scheduled for mid December and it is hoped that draft plans will be available in January.

2025/192 ACKLINGS PLAYGROUND

The trees have been ordered and are due to arrive w/c 24th November. Cllr Bolton negotiated a revised price within the original budget. The trees will be delivered to Cllr Brown. Claire Michellis has organised a working party to plant them in early December.



It was agreed to install a plaque in front of one of the trees to acknowledge Peter Rose's work on this project and others. It was also agreed to give Peter a gift of wine (up to £100) as a thank-you from the PC.

Actions: Clerk to circulate Peter Rose plaque options for consideration.
Cllr Brown to purchase wine for Peter Rose.

2025/193 LONG WITTENHAM TO CLIFTON HAMPDEN PERMISSIVE PATH

No progress.

2025/194 NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Cllr Thompson had sent a draft revision of the NDP to Cllrs Yuille and Brown for review and comment.

2025/195 SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES (SIDs)

The council has been awarded a £5,700 grant towards this project from the TVP Community Fund. With Cllr Corney's departure from the council, resident Mike Duff has taken over the management of the project. Mr Duff and Cllr Brown met Jon Beale, the OCC Road Safety Officer, on-site on 14th November. Two potential sites where solar powered SIDs will work have been identified, one at each end of the village. Jon Beale will combine the installation with further de-cluttering of existing signs. He is currently working on the designs and will advise when prices are received from the OCC contractor.

2025/196 Cllr DAVID CORNEY RESIGNATION / COUNCILLOR RECRUITMENT

Cllr Corney resigned from the council on 17th October. SODC was informed and the statutory notice of a vacancy was displayed for the appropriate time. SODC has advised that the vacancy can be filled by co-option. There are now two vacancies on the council, but so far, no-one has come forward to fill them.

2025/197 PARISH CLERK / RFO RECRUITMENT

A Job Description for this role was circulated and agreed by email. A job advert was posted on the OALC website on 18th November and there have been two enquiries so far. It was agreed to wait until the end of the month when the OALC Newsletter containing the advert will be published before evaluating candidates.

2025/198 PLAYGROUNDS MAINTENANCE

Several minor issues at the village playgrounds have been identified by the weekly inspections:

- The rope bridge at Bodkins has a loose screw.
- The hex board on the slide bridge at Bodkins is rotting.
- There is a hole in the slide structure post at Westfield which needs filling.
- The picnic table at Westfield has a loose board.

It was agreed to ask Jim Brown if he would look at these issues.

It was agreed to replace the picnic table at Bodkins next Spring.

Logs Unlimited will be asked to check the new picket fence at Acklings for rot.

Cllr Bolton said that when the new swings are installed at Bodkins it will be necessary to replace the security posts at the entrance with a picket fence.

Actions: Clerk to ask Jim Brown to look at the playground issues.
Cllr Brown to ask Logs Unlimited to check the fence at Acklings and quote for a picket fence at Bodkins.

2025/199 GRANT APPLICATION – CITIZENS ADVICE

The grant request form had been circulated prior to the meeting. £400 approved.

2025/200 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- Long Wittenham Athletic Club
Cllr Bolton reported:
 - The club wants to add a new extension to the clubhouse to provide better kitchen facilities. Approved.
 - The Playbus is expected to sell soon or go into storage.
- Village Hall Committee (VHC)
The chair of the VHC, Nick Caw, has called an "open meeting" on 26th November to find "new volunteers to help manage and develop the hall". The PC's representative on the VHC Cllr Bolton is unable to attend. Cllr Yuille hopes to be there.

2025/201 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS

- Three levels of Local Government Poster
Cllr Yuille had circulated this before the meeting but not all councillors had received it. To be approved by email.
- Westfield Boundaries
There is a new occupier in No 4 Westfield Road. They have changed the front garden and put in new fences. Some residents have commented this is contrary to the legal covenant on all properties in Westfield requiring that front gardens do not have walls or fences. However it is clear that over the years many properties have ignored this and put in fences and hedges. The PC cannot enforce the covenant and residents cannot advise who is responsible for doing so.
- War Memorial
Cllr Brown suggested that the memorial is getting quite dirty and would benefit from a clean. The War Memorials Trust is the responsible body and they do not recommend cleaning except in the most gentle ways as it can damage the stonework. It was agreed that it should have a light cleaning with plain water and a natural bristle brush in the Spring.

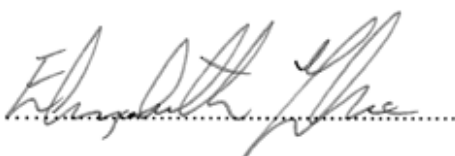
2025/202 FINANCIAL REPORT

- 2026-27 Precept
The RFO will produce a projection of the accounts to the end of the year for the December meeting so that a preliminary budget can be approved. This will inform the decision on next year's precept which needs to be made at that meeting.
- Income during October
30/10/2025 TVP Community Fund (SIDs) £5,700.00
- Expenditure during October

04/10/2025 Elliff Expenses (Website Hosting-Anti Spam-Domain Rnwal)	£88.70
04/10/2025 Logs Unlimited Inv 250350	£410.40
07/10/2025 Plainlaw Solicitors Inv 9666 (Community Hub)	£1,531.20
10/10/2025 Clerk's Salary October 2025	£354.25
10/10/2025 Bosley Expenses (Payroll)	£290.14
10/10/2025 Bosley Expenses (Stationery)	£42.00
20/10/2025 Bank Service Charge	£4.25
21/10/2025 The Royal British Legion (Wreath & Donation)	£50.00
24/10/2025 SODC Inv 10392306 (Dog Bins)	£561.88
October Expenditure Total	£3,332.82

Meeting Closed at 8:20pm.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 18th December 2025

Signed: 

Date: 18/12/25

APPENDIX A

District Councillor Report November 2025

Joint Local Plan update

The council has written a second letter to the Inspectors in response to their advice to withdraw the draft Plan. You can read the letter here:

LPA40 South and Vale letter to our Inspectors 20 October 2025_Redacted

The letter points out the most recent correspondence from the Matthew Pennycook MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, to Paul Morrison, Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate. The Minister outlines his expectation that local plans submitted in the current plan-making system should be treated with an appropriate degree of flexibility. He specifically refers to the Duty to Cooperate (DtC), asking Inspectors to be proportionate in what is expected as the DtC evidence, and to consider the context. His message is directly relevant to our Joint Local Plan. The Minister states: "In advance of the new plan-making system and mechanisms for cross-boundary cooperation coming into force, the final set of local plans being delivered within the current system remain essential to facilitating the effective delivery of housing, jobs and infrastructure. It is therefore critical that Inspectors approach examinations of current system plans with the appropriate degree of flexibility. The evidencing of expectations to establish whether the legal and soundness tests have been met – including with respect to the Duty to Cooperate – should be proportionate to the context in which plans in the existing system are being prepared."

Furthermore, Oxford City Council have re considered their housing need and published a draft option with lower housing numbers than in their previous one. The letter from SODC shows this revised housing requirement in a table:

Oxford's housing need	21,740
Oxford's capacity	9,851
Unmet need for Oxford already agreed in South, Vale, West and Cherwell	14,300
Balance (surplus)	+ 2,411

I hope this will convince the Inspectors to re consider their advice.

Postal Voting

New regulations mean residents who vote by post now need to reapply every three years if they wish to continue to cast their ballot this way.

Starting with a short trial in October, the Council will write to people when their postal vote is up for renewal. The first group this rule change impacts, and who will receive a notification, will be those who applied for a postal vote on or before 31 January 2024. They will need to re-apply by 31 January 2026, otherwise their postal vote will expire.

You can find more information on postal voting on the Electoral Commission website.

Equalities and Diversity Roadshow

The Council is travelling across the districts over the next few weeks for an Equalities Roadshow, speaking to the public about what the councils are doing to support equality and finding out more about what equality means to them.

They have been in Thame and Wantage and the roadshow continues:

Monday 3 November, Abingdon Market Place, 8am – 3pm

Thursday 13 November, Henley Market Place, 8am – 3pm

Friday 21 November, Wallingford Town Hall, 9am – 2pm

(Didcot – date and location TBC)

Waste and Recycling Updates Guide

There are new easy-to-read guides to help residents with their waste and recycling. The guides include what items go in which bin, who to contact if a collection is missed, how to reduce your waste and much more. There are two guides, available to view now on our website. Paper copies will also be provided to new homes.

For **South Oxfordshire** residents:

- a) houses with individual wheelie bins - guide to waste and recycling
- b) flats and properties with communal bins - guide to waste and recycling

New webpages for Towns and Parishes

The Climate team have developed a webpage hosting a variety of information for them from funding opportunities, ready-made strategies and case studies of other community projects which could offer them a framework for what they are trying to achieve. The page is under our Action on Climate and Nature page called **What Town and Parish Councils can do** (South/ Vale).

Energy Saving Help and Ideas

If residents are concerned about heating bills this winter, they may be interested in our updated energy saving leaflet available on our websites (South/Vale). The flyer comprises information about energy saving solutions from insulation to air source heat pumps and details of where people can get funding to help install these - including the new Warm Homes Grant.

If Parish Councils would like some hard copies of this leaflet, please contact our Climate Team.

Grant application deadline coming up:

The Food and Warmth Grant Scheme – previously known as the Household Support Fund – is open for applications until **6th Nov 2025**. Voluntary and community organisations and town and parish councils can apply to support those who need the most help this winter.

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

APPENDIX B

County Councillor Report November 2025

1. HART of the Community – Tackling Local Highways Issues

Oxfordshire County Council has launched new Highways Asset Response Teams (HARTs) to deliver fast, visible improvements to local roads and footpaths - directly responding to resident concerns.



These mobile teams are designed to “blitz” areas with clusters of small but noticeable issues reported via Fix My Street, such as:

- Cleaning street signs
- Removing damaged railings
- Clearing overgrown vegetation
- Resetting uneven slabs and kerbstones
- Cleaning debris from footways
- Removing fly posters and redundant street barriers
- Patching smaller road defects
- Repairing footway defects

What parishes can do:

- Encourage residents to report issues (preferably with photos) via Fix My Street: <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk>
- **Highlight local hotspots to the County Council for future HART visits – Have you received yours?**

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/hart-of-the-community-new-teams-target-areas-most-in-need-of-highway-work/>

2. Have Our Say – Science Vale Movement and Place Plan Consultation

Oxfordshire County Council has launched a public consultation on the new Movement and Place (MAP) Plan for Science Vale — a long-term vision to improve transport, public spaces, and quality of life across the area.

The MAP Plan is a 25-year strategy covering towns and villages including Didcot, Wantage, Harwell, East & West Hagbourne, North & South Moreton, Long & Little Wittenham, Sutton Courtenay, Milton, and others. It aims to support sustainable growth by:

- Improving walking, cycling, and public transport options
- Enhancing public spaces and village centres
- Reducing congestion and improving air quality
- Supporting access to jobs, education, and services
- Making travel safer and more inclusive

The plan is a “live” document, meaning it will be regularly updated to reflect community feedback and future needs.

What parishes can do:

- Encourage residents to take part in the consultation before **1 December 2025**
- Share the MAP Plan summary and survey link locally
- Provide parish-level feedback on transport priorities and public space improvements

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/science-vale-map>

Your input will help shape the final version of the plan, which is due to be presented to the Council’s Cabinet in January 2026.

3. INFO & ACTION – Electric Blanket Safety Checks – Over One in Three Fail

Following the recent electric blanket testing events promoted by September’s CC report, Oxfordshire County Council’s Trading Standards team has reported a concerning increase in failure rates.

Between 22 September and 10 October, over 920 electric blankets were tested at ten events across the county — nearly 200 more than last year. Alarming, 338 blankets failed safety checks, representing a 36.7% failure rate, up from the previous year.

Why this matters:

- Faulty electric blankets pose a serious risk of fire or injury, especially during colder months.
- Even newer blankets can fail safety tests.

- Common issues include exposed or bunched wires, wear and tear, and internal faults not visible to the eye.

What parishes can do:

- Remind residents to check their electric blankets before use
- Share advice from Electrical Safety First on how to spot faults:
<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk>
- Encourage safe disposal of old or damaged blankets at local recycling centres

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cpd2y0je4zqo>

4. INFO - New Lane Rental Scheme to Reduce Roadwork Disruption

Oxfordshire County Council has received government approval to introduce a Lane Rental Scheme (LRS), aimed at reducing the disruption caused by roadworks on the county's busiest roads.

The scheme allows the council to charge utility companies and developers a daily fee for carrying out works on key parts of the road network during peak times. This creates a financial incentive to:

1. Complete works more quickly
2. Avoid peak-hour disruption
3. Improve coordination between different works promoters
4. Use smarter planning and technology to minimise delays

Why this matters:

- Oxfordshire sees around 30,000 roadwork requests per year
- The current permit scheme only allows cost recovery — LRS goes further by encouraging better behaviour
- Roughly 9% of the network (the busiest roads, esp bus usage) will be subject to charges
- Surplus income will be reinvested into improving the highway network

What parishes can do:

Share this update with residents to explain how the council is tackling roadwork disruption

5. REMINDER – Free Park and Ride Bus Travel & Temporary Congestion Charge

As shared last month, Oxfordshire County Council is offering free bus travel from park and ride sites until the end of January 2026, alongside a temporary congestion charge in Oxford.

- Valid for up to 2 adults and 3 children with a park and ride parking ticket
- Applies to all bus services from the five park and ride sites

The £5 daily congestion charge applies to six key roads, but many exemptions and free permits are available — including for carers, blue badge holders, and Oxfordshire residents, 25 per car in our area.

The aim of the scheme is to cut congestion & improve air quality

What parishes can do:

- **Remind residents to take advantage of the free travel offer**
- **Share this informal but helpful guide** with tips and exemptions
<https://oxfordclarion.uk/twelve-easy-hacks-to-beat-oxfords-congestion-charge-2/>
- or/and share official Permit info and applications site:
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/congestioncharge

6. REMINDER: 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 wellbeing 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>

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

