

Long Wittenham Parish Council meeting held on 15th January 2026

Present: Chairman Liz Yuille, Cllr Steve Brown, Cllr Steve Bolton, Cllr Ian Burton, Cllr Mark Thompson, RFO Clifford Bosley.

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

Chairman Yuille welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2026/001 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

County Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith.

2026/002 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

2026/003 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- Resident Richard Jackson was present to comment on the Frenchs planning application – see section 2026/007 below.
- Cllr Bolton advised that resident Monica Evason will be hosting a 'Warm Hub' at Long Wittenham Athletic Club twice a month. It was suggested that she completes a grant application form for funds to support the initiative.
- Resident had emailed the council with two issues concerning motor vehicles on concrete Fieldside. The council agreed that there is little it can do. The chairman will write to Mr Penberth.

2026/004 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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

2026/004 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

- Cllr Brown confirmed that Claire Michellis has been given a Vine & Spice voucher in recognition of her contribution to the Acklings Playground project.
- Logs Unlimited have yet to be asked to quote for a new picket fence at the entrance to Bodkins.
- The new rubber pinboard for the Fieldside noticeboard is ongoing.

2026/005 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

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

2026/006 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

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

2026/007 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

P25/S3890/HH 3 The Crescent Long Wittenham NSV

P25/S3860/HH Frenchs High Street Long Wittenham

- Following comments from resident Richard Jackson, whose property abuts the application location, the council agreed to object on the following grounds:
 1. Concern that the applicants may extend the annex over time using the right to Permissive Development;
 2. There is insufficient garden area for the size of the buildings on the site;
 3. On the plans, the applicants appear to be including a triangle of land that is owned by Frenchs Riverside, a separate property;
 4. Windows overlook a neighbouring property.

SODC has invited councillors to attend a Planning Training Course on 26th February or 3rd March. Cllr Burton is considering attending.



2026/007 COMMUNITY HUB

Pye Homes had reported by email that investigations into drainage on the site were continuing and an update meeting will be called as soon as these are completed. They also confirmed that the exclusivity agreement with Robert Weavers, the landowner, is being extended for another six months.

2026/008 NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Cllr Thompson is awaiting revised maps from David Corney so that he can produce a second draft for review before it is sent to SODC for approval.

2026/009 PARISH CLERK / RFO RECRUITMENT

Four applicants have been asked to attend interviews on 29th January at the Village Hall. Assuming that one of them is appointed, it is hoped that they will take over on 1st April.

2026/010 COUNCILLOR RECRUITMENT

The chairman will circulate two draft website posts with a view to encouraging residents to join the PC.

Actions: Chairman to circulate draft councillor recruitment website posts.

2026/011 PLAYGROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The clerk confirmed that Jim Brown had completed the playground repairs identified at last month's meeting as requested.

2026/012 SESRO PARISH COUNCILS JOINT RESPONSE

The 'Joint Response' to the Abingdon Reservoir consultation proposed by East Hanney PC, had been circulated by email and the council had agreed to support it. The response was submitted on 13th January.

2026/013 BONFIRE NIGHT 2026

The team that ran the event last year has offered to run it again on 7th November 2026. It was agreed to support the event in the usual way by paying for the fireworks in advance with reimbursement following, and providing insurance for the event through the council's insurance.

2026/014 DEFIBRILLATOR COURSE.

Cllr Brown has arranged for SCAC (South Central Ambulance Charity) to run another defibrillator course at the Village Hall on 15th April. It was agreed to cover the cost of the course (£10 per head) and the hall hire.

2026/015 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

● Long Wittenham Athletic Club

There are interested buyers for the play bus, but it is awaiting an MOT.

The Rainbows will be maypole dancing at the club on May day. It was suggested that Cllr Bolton contact Janet Haylett to determine who owns the maypole stored at the Village Hall.

The club will be hosting a Valentines Day dance and a St Patrick's Day celebration.

● Village Hall Committee (VHC)

Following the 'open meeting' in November, several residents have met to start the process of creating a new Village Hall Committee.



Long Wittenham Parish Council meeting held on 15th January 2026

2026/016 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS

- Cllr Brown reminded the council that an outdoor table tennis table was in the plan for Acklings Playground. There was discussion about whether this would be a useful addition. It was agreed to get quotations and to find out if grants might be available.
- Cllr Thompson has met with Kate Lowe of Clifton Hampden PC to discuss traffic use of Clifton Hampden Bridge when HIF1 is completed. They agreed that traffic should be restricted using ANPR or CCTV technology. Cllr Thompson has been invited to speak to the Clifton Hampden PC.
- Cllr Burton reported that as footpath warden he has completed his yearly round up of unresolved issues within the parish boundaries and updated the Camsweb database.
- Cllr Burton reported that he attended the SODC Planning Committee meeting on 14th January at which the planning application for the land next to Hamilton Barn was discussed. He presented the PC's case. The application was approved.

2026/017 FINANCIAL REPORT

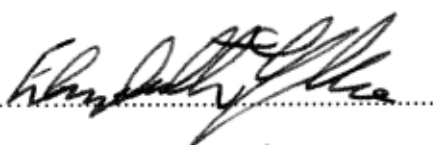
- 3rd Quarter Accounts
The RFO had circulated 3rd Quarter Accounts by email before the meeting.
Approved.
- CIL Drawdown
It was agreed to drawdown CIL funds to cover the cost of the Acklings Playground project shortfall and the new swings at Bodkins. The RFO will circulate the suggested amount for approval.
- Income during December
12/12/2025 SODC (Bodkins Swings Grant) £1,495.00
- Expenditure during December
02/12/2025 Logs Unlimited Inv 250551 £1,980.00
12/12/2025 Creative Play Inv 32724 (Bodkins Swings) £9,702.00
12/12/2025 Clerk's Salary December 2025 £354.25
12/12/2025 Brown Expenses (Acklings Trees, Gravel, Land Registry, Gift) £469.14
15/12/2025 Oxfordshire County Council Inv 3920870897 (SID Poles) £1,077.67
19/12/2025 Bank Service Charge £4.25
December Expenditure Total £13,587.31

Actions: RFO to circulate suggested amount for CIL drawdown for approval.

Meeting Closed at 8:50pm.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 19th February 2026

Signed:



Date:

19/2/26

APPENDIX A

District Councillor Report – January 2026

New Leader for the Council

Cllr David Rouane has resigned after 4 years as leader of the Council and the new leader of the Libdem administration is Cllr Maggie Fillipova-Rivers. She has been in Cabinet since 2019. The whole council endorsed her nomination at the council meeting on 11th December; I think she will make a good leader who has relevant and wide-ranging experience and values, but it has to be said that the Libdems run the council and in the end, of course, it is their call as they have a majority. We now have a new chief Executive too, in Adrianna Partridge, whose appointment was also confirmed by all councillors. Adrianna has been deputy leader of the council for many years and having worked closely with her when I was on Cabinet, I have a great deal of confidence in her.

Also at the Council meeting, I seconded a motion on the Thames Water proposed reservoir, asking for an emergency plan to be made ahead of its construction. Currently the plan need only be made after the reservoir is ready to function. Many residents and businesses who would be affected by an emergency discharge from the reservoir feel this leaves them in a precarious position, not knowing what preparations they can or should make or where to go for support. The motion was passed unanimously. The leader of the council will now write to the Minister responsible requesting this.

Green Party councillor, Jo Robb asked two questions on how the council monitored actions taken by Capita as contractor on unpaid council tax bills and whether the Cabinet member was assured that actions were proportionate and fairly executed. The answers she received were detailed but not as reassuring as needed, but the questions did a good job of highlighting that the Council needs to constantly get assurance that vulnerable people are not being harassed, intimidated or being asked to pay unreasonable fees. Cllr Robb continues to follow up with the Cabinet member for further assurances.

I and my fellow Green Party Councillors supported a motion from Cllr Snowden (Con) on supporting the hospitality industry in the District as much as we are legally able to do, in this time of escalating costs. This motion was passed.

Information on the motions and questions in the meeting can be found on the website here: Agenda for Council on Thursday, 11 December 2025, 6.00 pm

SESRO consultation response

The Thames Water South-East Reservoir Option consultation is still open- **until the 13th of January**. South Oxfordshire District Council is compiling its response, but the council position remains the same in that it maintains its opposition to one huge reservoir as unjustified. I have read the draft response and have made some small suggested changes on the issues it presents for those living in our ward, including the emergency response plan (or lack of one).

Please consider responding yourselves here:

South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) - Statutory Consultation 2025

Waste Vehicles - disappointing decision

Despite careful and stringent scrutiny by the Joint Scrutiny committee, led by Green councillors, Kat Foxall (Vale) and Jo Robb (South), the Cabinet decided to go ahead with buying a new fleet of waste vehicles powered by fossil fuels. The committee was not clear how this decision had been reached, how it aligned with our carbon targets or why alternatives, such as leasing, were dismissed as not suitable.

Joint Local Plan update

Continuing the correspondence, the Council have written back to the Planning Inspectors requesting them to continue with the examination of the Joint Local Plan, after the Minister's statement. The Council have asked the Inspectors to resume the hearings and progress the Joint



Local Plan through examination and, all being well, to adoption. The letter is published here: LPA41 Councils' reply to the Inspectors' letter setting out how the Councils wish to proceed. I hope this will mean the jeopardy that this Plan has been in will be settled and we can look forward to having it adopted this year.

Oxford-Cambridge Growth Commission

An interim report has been published - so far, so Oxcam growth deal. You can read it here: Interim report of the Oxford Growth Commission. The report still focuses on the requirement for large numbers of homes without being clear what homes for whom, despite the fact we can see that private market homes are not solving the housing affordability crisis for those on lower incomes and young people. Disappointingly, there is nothing new or innovative in the report at all.

Laptop Donation

Both vale and South District councils donated the older laptops which still work but are no longer usable for South and Vale to SOFEA and Aspire for their 'getting people online' programme and supporting local people. They hoped to get many out in time for Christmas.

A new calendar for 2026 has been published with dates and campaign weeks that the council will campaign for or mark in some way.

South Oxfordshire 2025 Diversity and Social Campaign calendar

sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk

APPENDIX B

County Councillor Report – January 2026

1. Didcot – Oxford Rail Line Closure: Buses Replacing Trains (1–8 February 2026)

Major engineering work at Oxford Station means the rail line between Didcot Parkway and Oxford will be fully closed for eight days at the start of February. All services on this stretch will be replaced by buses.

Why is this happening?

Network Rail is demolishing and replacing the Botley Road railway bridge, installing infrastructure for Oxford's new Platform 5, and carrying out work required for the Oxford Station Enhancement Project.

- Closure dates: Sunday 1 February – Sunday 8 February 2026
- All trains between Didcot Parkway and Oxford cancelled
- Replacement buses will operate:
 - 2 buses per hour non-stop Didcot ↔ Oxford
 - 1 bus per hour calling at Radley
- CrossCountry will run buses Didcot ↔ Oxford ↔ Banbury
- Rail replacement services depart from the front of Didcot station and Becket Street long-stay car park in Oxford

2. Free Park & Ride Bus Travel Offer to Continue Until March 2026

Oxfordshire County Council has confirmed that free Park & Ride bus journeys will now continue until 31 March 2026. The scheme was introduced on 29 October 2025 alongside the temporary congestion charge and has seen a large increase in usage.

Why the extension?

The scheme has proven extremely popular, with over 179,000 additional Park & Ride journeys in the first two months compared with the previous year. Increased usage is helping to reduce traffic, speed up buses, and improve air quality. Income from the temporary congestion charge is being reinvested to fund the offer.

Key Details

- Free travel valid until: **31 March 2026**

- Who can travel free: Up to two adults and three children with a valid Park & Ride parking ticket
- Where it applies: On any Stagecoach, Oxford Bus Company, or Thames Travel bus that stops at an Oxford Park & Ride site
- Parking cost: £2.50 for up to 16 hours (bus travel element is free)
- Usage increase: Redbridge Park & Ride up 63%, others also showing significant growth

3. REMINDER - Consultation – Improving Oxfordshire's Fire and Rescue Service

Oxfordshire County Council is consulting on proposals to improve how the Fire and Rescue Service responds to emergencies and delivers community safety. The aim is to ensure:

- More fire engines available during peak risk times
- Faster response to incidents across Oxfordshire
- Better alignment of resources to areas of greatest need
- Futureproofing the service for growth and sustainability

Why change?

- Currently, fewer firefighters are on duty during the day, when emergencies are most frequent, and more at night, when incidents are less common.
- This imbalance can lead to slower daytime response times and costly overtime.
- Changes projected to deliver £189k–£310k annual efficiencies by reducing overtime and fleet costs and allow reinvestment into prevention work and modern facilities
- Proposals are based on independent modelling and include reshaping prevention and protection work.

More locally, Impact on Rural Villages like ours (e.g., Cholsey, Wittenhams, Moretons, Hagbournes): positives.

- Faster daytime response: The main proposal forecasts 1 min 46 sec quicker arrival for the first fire engine during the day.
- More prevention work: Extra daytime capacity means more home safety visits and community risk reduction activities in rural areas.
- No change to the Didcot day crew and key hub station

More locally, negatives;

- Wallingford Fire Station Changes
If moved to Crowmarsh, this is positive for modern facilities, but it means construction disruption and possible longer travel for some staff.
On-call firefighters who mainly work during the day may face redundancy risk.
- While daytime response improves, night-time response remains vulnerable due to low on-call availability.
- Staff Morale and Recruitment - Changes to crewing models and relocation may affect morale and retention, especially for on-call firefighters in South Oxfordshire.

Key dates

- Consultation Closes: 20 January 2026
- Decision: Spring 2026 after Cabinet review

4. REMINDER - Your residents will need to book a visit to a household waste centre from January

Oxfordshire County Council has agreed changes to how the county's seven HWRCs will operate, following a public consultation with over 5,800 responses

Why the changes?

It is designed to improve recycling rates and traffic flow and ensure fairer costs for Oxfordshire taxpayers.

Key Details

- Booking system starts: 14 January 2026
- Residents to book up to two weeks in advance or 30 minutes before visiting.



- Customers must separate recyclable material from mixed waste before visiting.
- £15 charge for non-Oxfordshire residents per visit.
- Van/trailer permits reduced to 10 per year.

5. 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.

6. INFO: Council Warns of Major Budget Challenges Following Government Funding Cuts

Oxfordshire County Council has published its draft budget for 2026/27, warning of significant financial pressures due to changes in government funding distribution.

Why this matters

- A new funding formula redistributes money away from Oxfordshire, creating a £5.4m gap for 2026/27 and at least £14m more savings needed in 2027/28.
- By 2028/29, grant funding will reduce by £24.1m, excluding a £3.1m ring-fenced increase for Families First Partnership.
- The government assumes councils will raise Council Tax by 4.99% annually for the next three years.

Key Details

Budget setting date: 10 February 2026.

Options include:

- Use of reserves and bank interest income.
- Reduced contingency for pay inflation.
- Additional £1.5m savings from services in 2026/27.

Positive investments proposed for this FY:

- £4m drainage improvements over two years.
- £150k Wantage Market Place redesign.
- Library upgrades: £360k Wantage, £250k Goring (+£500k in 2027/28), £550k Didcot.
- £14m adult social care, £19m children's services.
- £400k park & ride ticket scheme continuation.
- £320k bus stop digital display maintenance.

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