Long Wittenham Parish Council meeting held on 16th July 2026

Present: Cllr Liz Yuille, Cllr Steve Bolton, Cllr Mark Thompson, Cllr Steve Brown and Cllr Ian Burton

In attendance: Liz Cruse (Clerk/RFO).

Cllr Bolton welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2026/121 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Bolton stood as the July meeting Chairman and was unanimously agreed.

2026/122 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Richard Jackson, County Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith District Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye

2026/123 COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION

A resident that had indicated that she may stand as a Cllr didn't attend the meeting.

2026/124 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

2026/125 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- Prew has emailed regarding the purchase of a RBL Wreath for Remembrance Day. The Council discussed and RESOLVED to agree to Type C at a cost of £30 with a £20 donation, a total of £50**.**
- Cllr Burton advised that he had received complaints about regular noise from engines at a house in Sinodun Close. The Council discussed and agreed to send a letter to the resident.

Action: Cllr Burton to advise Clerk of address of property

2026/126 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Parish Council resolved to sign the minutes of the Annual meeting held on 21st May 2026 and for the 18th June 2026.

2026/127 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Cllr Brown delivered the latter to the Old Vicarage regarding the overgrown hedge, he had spoken to the resident who advised that she believed there was no issue with it. The Council discussed and agreed to ask the resident to give it a hard prune out of the bird nesting season.

Cllr Bolton advised that the Fence at Acklings is now in the process of being moved.

The Clerk advised that the new Parish Council website has just been created. She will look through it and then send for review with the Cllr's prior to publishing.

2026/128 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Hope-Smith's and Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye reports for June, sent by email, are attached in appendix A and B respectively.

2026/129 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

P26/S2306/HH, 16/07/26, Bridge House, Clifton Hampden NSV

Cllr Brown raised the Appeal regarding Land off Sires Hill southeast of B4106 Didcot. The Council objected at the Planning stage and agreed to reiterate the objection to the Appeal process.

Action: Cllr Brown to comment on the Appeal

2026/130 COMMUNITY HUB

Cllr Brown advised that there had been no further progress regarding the hub.

2026/131 NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Cllr Thompson advised that Cllr Brown had forwarded the Contaminated land policy. Cllr Thompson and Yuille have reviewed the maps and incorporated them. There is now just formatting to do and some outstanding questions for the Council.

2026/132 COUNCILLOR RECRUITMENT

Cllr Jackson has organised Saturday 5th Sept Saturday for the morning drop-in session for Councillor recruitment, combining with the Friends of St Mary's Church.

2026/133 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- Long Wittenham Athletic Club
  None
- Village Hall Committee (VHC)The next meeting is on the 27th July, Cllr Brown agreed to attend.

2026/134 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS

- Ongoing costs and maintenance for Village Website
  Cllr Yuille advised that herself and Martin Elliff are willing to continue to maintain the village website once the Parish Council website is set up if the Council would be willing to pay for the hosting costs. The Council discussed and agreed to continue to pay the costs.

- Dropbox GDPR Review
  Cllr Yuille advised that she has completed the review and moved the documents earmarked for deletion to marked folder in Dropbox. She requested that another member of the Council review these documents before final deletion. Cllr Burton agreed to review them.

- The Pound – what are we going to do about it?
  Cllr Yuille asked for a discussion regarding how best to tidy up and maintain the Pound. Cllr Brown has spent some time recently weeding it but as a third of it is

gravel it takes time to maintain. Cllr Biolton suggested grassing the whole area to make maintenance easier. Cllr Brown asked if it could be a question posed to residents at the open meeting in Sept, to which the Council agreed.

- The Bridge PC Contact details need to be updated
  Cllr Yuille advised that the contact details in the magazine state herself as the contact and are wrong. It was agreed that the Clerk should be the Contact listed and Cllr Bolton advised he would get them updated.

Action: Cllr Bolton to request details are amended

- Wards Field Footpath
  Cllr Brown has now seen the Permit for the Tree felling and it states up to 85 Trees if unsafe. The PCC meets at the end of the month to discuss. Jim Brown has been clearing the right of way on the other side of the field for people to access rather than through the trees and Logs have been clearing the waste. However the bank of the footpath has dropped over time and the path won't be accessible to all one cleared. The Council discussed getting quotes for extra vegetation clearance and building up the bank.

Action: Cllr's Bolton and Brown to obtain quotes

- Defibrillators
  The Defibrillator in the phone box is maintained by a resident However Cllr Brown advised that the resident now has the house on the market, and the Defib will need to be maintained by the Parish Council.

2026/135 FINANCIAL REPORT

- Income during June
  01/06/26 1 The Crescent Rent £5.00
  01/06/26 2 The Crescent Rent £5.00
  01/06/26 3 The Crescent Rent £5.00
  01/06/26 4 The Crescent Rent £5.00
  01/06/26 5 The Crescent Rent £5.00
  01/06/26 6 The Crescent Rent £5.00
  09/06/26 OCC Grass Cutting £857.21
  11/06/26 Insurance Complaint Compensation £50
  June Total, £937.21

- Expenditure during June
  18/06/2026, Scribe, £39.60
  1/6/2026, Logs Unlimited, £809.94
  8/6/2026, OALC - Talking Tables, £48.00
  4/6/2026, Scribe, £39.6
  19/06/26, Table Tennis England - Ping 6 Outdoor Static Table,£1795.00
  26/06/26, Auditing Solutions Ltd - Internal Audit 2025-26, £540.00
  30/06/26, PMF Products - Academy 5-a-side Goals, £1888.00
  30/06/26, Clerk Salary (June), £386.24
  30/06/26, Cruse Expenses (HMRC Tax for 1st quarter), 270
  June Total, £5816.38

- 1st Quarter Accounts
  The Clerk had printed the first Quarters accounts report from the new Accounts software Scribe. Clerk to email accounts reports to Cllrs to accept.

Action: Clerk to forward reports to Cllr's

- Savings Account
  The Clerk advised that she had reviewed Unity and Lloyds savings account rates and it was very variable on how long a notice period they would be prepared to have and how much would be placed in the account. The Council dicussed and asked the Clerk to compare accounts for between £7-10,000. Cllr Thompson also advised that Cahoot currently have a good savings rate.

Action: Clerk to investigate savings accounts

Meeting Closed at 20.47pm.
Date of next meeting: Thursday 17th September 2026

Signed: ……..... Date: .....

Appendix A

County Councillor Report July 2026

Wildfire Prevention – Fire Service Issues Summer Safety Advice

Key Details

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service is urging residents to take extra care during hot, dry weather following a number of major wildfires across the county in recent years.

Fire crews attended four major wildfires in 2025, three in 2024 and seven in 2023, as well as many smaller outdoor fires. Common causes include discarded cigarettes, litter, disposable barbecues and garden
fires. Even a small spark can quickly ignite dry grass and vegetation, putting people, homes and wildlife at risk. Residents are advised to use barbecues safely, dispose of coals responsibly, and take extra care when burning garden waste.

What Parishes Can Do

Share wildfire prevention messages through parish newsletters, noticeboards and socialmedia.

Remind residents not to discard cigarettes, litter or glass bottles in the countryside. Encourage safe use of barbecues and garden bonfires, particularly during periods of hotand dry weather.

Promote the Fire Service's wider safety messaging, including water safety advice duringthe summer months.

LINK https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshire-fire-crews-launch-wildfire-prevention-advice/

Rural Speed Limit Review – 60 Further Routes Under Review

Key Details

Oxfordshire County Council is expanding its review of speed limits on rural A and B roads as part of the county's Vision Zero programme to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on the road network.

Around 60 additional routes will be assessed during 2026/27, with reviews based on collision data, road layout and how roads are used by motorists, cyclists, walkers and horseriders. The review has already resulted in changes on roads including the A4074, A40, A420, A417 and A4260, with further proposals for the A361 due for decision in July.

The council stresses that this is not a blanket reduction in speed limits. Each route will e assessed individually using Department for Transport guidance and local evidence.

Recent provisional government statistics suggest serious and fatal collisions in Oxfordshire have fallen significantly, supporting the county's approach to road safety

What Parishes Can Do

Monitor local consultation opportunities as stakeholder engagement with parish and town councils will begin during the coming months.

Identify any local concerns about speeding, collision hotspots, or roads frequently used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Encourage residents to participate in any statutory consultations later this year when specific proposals are published.

Provide local knowledge and evidence to help ensure any proposed changes reflect the conditions and safety concerns on roads serving your community.
LINKS https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwy0d18dz44o

https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/speed-limit-review-to-look-at-improving-safety-on-60-rural-roads-this-year/ Rural Quiet Lanes Programme – First Trial Route Announced

Key Details

The first Quiet Lane trial route has been announced as part of Oxfordshire County Council's programme to make rural roads safer for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Quiet Lanes are intended to create roads where vulnerable users have greater priority and where through-traffic is discouraged.

Measures can include signage, lower speed limits and physical interventions such as bollards or gates to reduce traffic using the route as a shortcut.

The programme forms part of Oxfordshire's wider Vision Zero and active travel ambitions, helping improve safety and accessibility on rural roads. If successful, the trial could help inform similar schemes elsewhere in the county.

What Parishes Can Do

Consider whether local rural roads with significant walking, cycling or equestrian use might be suitable for future Quiet Lane designation. Review routes where through-traffic causes safety concerns despite relatively low traffic volumes.

Work with neighbouring parishes where routes cross parish boundaries. Monitor the trial and share feedback with Oxfordshire County Council as the programme develop

LINKS

https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/local-transport-and-connectivity-

plan/active-travel/quiet-lanes-programme

INFO - Council Secures Injunction to Protect Communities and Highway Safety

Key Details

Oxfordshire County Council has secured a High Court injunction to prevent the continued unauthorised placement of flags on or near the public highway.

The injunction follows a series of incidents across Oxfordshire involving the organisation Raise the Colours, including the installation of flags on highway infrastructure without permission.

The court hearing took place on 23 June 2026, and the named defendants have given undertakings not to erect flags on the highway, encourage others to do so, or abuse individuals removing them. The council states that the action relates to highway safety, obstruction, trespass, harassment and intimidation, rather than the content of any particular flag. Residents from across Oxfordshire, including Wallingford, reported concerns about safety risks, distress and confrontational behaviour associated with the installations. The injunction provides the council with additional powers to enforce against future unauthorised activity and supports its legal duty to keep the highway safe.

What Parishes Can Do

Share accurate information with residents that this action concerns highway safety and legal compliance, not restrictions on lawful flag displays on private property.

Remind community groups that any signs, flags or structures placed on highway land require appropriate permission.

Refer questions about enforcement or highway land ownership to Oxfordshire County Council. Report any highway obstructions or safety concerns through the appropriate council channels.

LINKS

https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council-secures-injunction/

INFO - Potholes – Oxfordshire Trials 15 Different Repair Methods

Key Details

Oxfordshire County Council and its highways contractor, M Group, have trialled 15 different pothole repair and road patching methods on a single stretch of road in Banbury.

The trial follows a winter which saw an unprecedented increase in potholes, with more than 33,000 highway defects repaired since January 2026.

Repair crews were increased from 7 to 25, with the council receiving over 1,300 pothole reports in a single week during the peak period.

The project builds on a similar trial in Steventon in 2023 and aims to identify the most durable, cost-effective and environmentally sustainable repair methods.

The test sections will be monitored over the next two years to compare the performance of different materials, techniques and technologies.

What Parishes Can Do

Encourage residents to continue reporting potholes through FixMyStreet:

https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Reassure residents that Oxfordshire is actively testing new approaches to improve the quality and lifespan of repairs. Highlight recurring pothole hotspots to me, your County Councillor where defects continue to reappear. Encourage residents to include photographs where safe to do so, helping highways teams assess and prioritise repairs more effectively.

LINK

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czdeymyddr8o

INFO - Budget Pressures – Cabinet to Review Financial Risks

Key Details

Oxfordshire County Council has warned that additional savings may be required beyond those already identified for future years.

The council currently needs to find at least £15.5 million of savings in 2027/28, rising to £22 million in 2028/29, following changes to government funding announced earlier this year.

A report to Cabinet on 14 July will set out a range of risks that could increase financial pressures further, including rising inflation, increasing demand for children's social care, uncertainty around adult social care funding, and possible changes to NHS and Better Care Fund arrangements.

The council has stated that reductions in government grant funding, combined with increasing costs and demand for services, mean difficult decisions will be required during future budget rounds.

Options to reduce expenditure and deliver savings are currently being developed, with more detail expected later this year as work begins on the 2027/28 budget.

What Parishes Can Do

Be aware that the council faces significant financial challenges over the next few years and that further savings proposals are likely to emerge during autumn and winter.

INFO - Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – Government Decision Expected Soon

Key Details

The government is expected to announce its preferred option for Local Government

Reorganisation (LGR) in Oxfordshire later this summer.

Three proposals have been submitted for consideration, ranging from a single unitary council for Oxfordshire through to models involving two or three councils.

The change would replace the current two-tier system of county and district councils with a new unitary structure, bringing services together under fewer authorities.

Preparatory work is already underway across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire to ensure councils are ready to implement whichever option is selected.

While a decision on the preferred model is expected shortly, the transition to any new

arrangements will take place over several years and existing councils continue to operate as normal.

What Parishes Can Do

Keep parish councillors and residents informed that a government decision is expected soon and that further details will follow once announced.

Continue engaging with Oxfordshire County Council and district councils as usual, as existing responsibilities and services remain unchanged for now.

Consider how future governance arrangements may affect relationships between parish councils and principal authorities.

Monitor future updates, as parish and town councils are expected to play an important role in local representation whichever model is adopted.

Appendix B

District Councillor Report July 2026

Housing and Employment Development Plan

As many of you know one of the District council's responsibilities is to draw up a development plan every five years for new housing and employment and where they should be sited in the district. The council has completed a new development plan jointly with the Vale district (the Joint Local Plan or JLP) and this was scheduled to be adopted by the end of 2025. Because of shillyshallying from government ministers and the interpretation of the government inspectors, this has been severely delayed and we have just been informed this JLP is not expected to be adopted until mid 2027. This is extremely disappointing because, as I have been said many times before, this plan is oneof the most advanced in the country in terms of energy efficient homes and businesses,carbon savings, renewable energy and nature recovery in new developments, while not adding any more to the high numbers of houses already committed. Furthermore, we have just been informed by the government that we must start a ANOTHER new development plan, even as the draft one is going through a further inspection process. This must start immediately and be completed in 30 months, a much faster timetable than previously. It is not clear whether policies in the draft JLP waiting to be adopted will be transferred into any new plan, but it IS clear that the required housing numbers will increase substantially. The upshot is that the delayed JLP with its exemplary policies will only be applied to new planning permissions for around two years. Considering this plan took over five years to develop with a considerable financialinvestment, I feel that government policy and direction is a complete waste of resources in the pursuit of ever increasing housing numbers that have not shown to solve the housing affordability crisis at all. Because of this waste I didn't feel I was able to vote in favour of starting a new plan at the last council meeting and in fact abstained as the council has not been offered a real choice in this. I just hope that the draft JLP can be adopted as soon as possible and some of the policies and there's in that plan can be transferred into any new policies.

Foundation Strategic Authority

Meanwhile, the council received a letter from the government proposing a Foundation Strategic Authority for the area covered by Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Swindon.
This is a regional governance body that oversees things like strategic transport infrastructure, economic development and regeneration. An FSA is overseen by representatives of all the constituent councils rather than by a mayor. It is a new layer of local government, brought in alongside the proposed change to unitary councils replacing the current District/County set up. The government has moved from a consultative approach, locally led, to a top down instruction it seems. What with a new development plan and housing numbers being forced upon us, the Oxford Growth Commission and now a Foundation Strategic Authority, at the moment it is very difficult to understand who will be doing what and what democratic oversight there will be.
Waste Collections Rounds will change Small changes to waste and recycling rounds from Monday 29 June 2026 will take place to improve service reliability. While every household’s

scheduled collection day will remain the same, the time that crews arrive on each street may change.

Vehicles may arrive earlier than usual, so residents should put their bins out by 6am on their scheduled collection day to avoid missing a collection. If possible, people are encouraged to put their bins out the evening before after 6pm, provided they do not block pavements, footpaths or cycle ways. Performing Arts Grant Open soon Local arts organisations can apply for a share of £60,000 from South Oxfordshire District Council's Performing Arts Grant when applications open on Monday 20 July. The funding supports arts and community projects that give residents across the district the chance to take part in the performing arts, bringing communities together, improving wellbeing and helping grow South Oxfordshire's arts scene. Voluntary and community organisations can apply for grants of between £500 and £5,000. Funding can be used for projects such as festivals, concerts, dance lessons, accessible music sessions and equipment purchases.

Didcot Festival of Cultures

On Saturday 11 July you're invited to celebrate culture and community at the first ever Didcot Festival of Cultures. This free, family-friendly event takes place from 10am to 3pm at Cornerstone Arts Centre, featuring live music, dance, food, workshops and activities inspired by cultures from across Britain and around the world. The event has been made possible by working in partnership with Didcot Town Council, Healthy Didcot, Cornerstone Arts Centre and Didcot Interfaith Group. For the full programme visit Cornerstone's website. Please email me with any District-related issues that I might be able to help with: sam.caseyrerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk