

# WESTON ON THE GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held in Village Hall on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Meeting Number 24.413

Note for information: Cherwell District Council – CDC, Oxfordshire County Council - OCC

### Public Participation

A resident raised the following points:

1. Church Lane issues: increase in the volume of traffic and speed, request to extend white line along Church Lane, pedestrians crossing signage. Police will attend a community speedwatch session and previously there has been no agreement by residents over the location of a pedestrian sign. To be discussed by the Traffic Calming Advisory Group.
2. Lack of water running through the village – it was confirmed this item will be covered under item 10 on agenda.
3. North Lane pond – it was confirmed this item will be covered under item 10 on agenda.

#### 24.413.1 To Receive: Apologies for non-attendance

Councillors Bohm (DB), Lanham (BL), Davis (SD), Miller (JM) and Rowan (TR) were all present.

Councillor Nigel Simpson (Oxfordshire County Council) joined the meeting part way through due to attending an alternative meeting first.

Councillor Coton (Cherwell District Council) sent her apologies.

4 members of the public were in attendance.

#### 24.413.2 To Receive: Declarations of Interest

JM declared an interest in relation to planning application 24/01572/AGN – OS Parcel 4658 North of Shell Filling Station and SW of the Chequers.

TR highlighted she had submitted a planning application but this had not been registered yet and would therefore not be discussed.

#### 24.413.3 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024 (DB)

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024 were discussed with no changes required.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024 was proposed by DB and seconded by BL. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to present minutes to Chair to sign, then file and upload to the web.

#### 24.413.4 For Information: Chairs Comment (DB)

DB welcomed everyone back from their summers and provided an update on the some of the key projects discussed this month which are not covered on the agenda:

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**Gigaclear:** The follow up for outstanding Gigaclear work in the village is positive. A list was assembled of issues and they were thoroughly discussed at the meeting with the Gigaclear team in July. To date a number of problems have been sorted but there are a few outstanding issues including The Manor Hotel, Mayfield opposite Milestone Lane (may need to access box by going under B430, possibly utilising a specific government grant), North Lane (work currently being done) and Mill Lane.

**Airfield:** DB sent a letter on behalf of the Parish Council to the Commanding Officer of RAF Brize Norton and is awaiting a response. The September 2024 trial has been postponed with no reason given. The latest news is that the enterprise has been advertised and is now open for bookings. DB asked Councillor Coton (who has been very helpful all summer) about the need for planning permission and she has spoken with planning officers and ultimately David Peckford, Head of Planning & Development at CDC. However, his response was more about a change of use of the site so this will be followed up further.

We have received a 'Who's Who' contact list for CDC and are now just waiting for the promised one from OCC. DB has also read through the Key Priorities for Thames Valley Police and she highlighted how impressed she was with the consideration of the local community. Their focus on Neighbourhood Policing has borne out in a quick response to an incident in the village this past week.

There are a number of houses for sale in the village and DB indicated the Council should keep an eye out for newcomers and welcome them into the village. A talk on the history of the village, by Paula Hessian, will be held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024 as part of the Weston Society.

The Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plans Alliance has a meeting in the village hall on October 12<sup>th</sup> 2024. The team is working hard to make sense of the new planning reforms. DB would appreciate it if anyone was available to help.

**24.413.5 For Information: Clerk report (Clerk)**

The clerks report to the Council was noted which confirmed payments from the Parish Council bank account including the usual monthly clerk salary payment and payments received including a £500.00 donation from Councillor Miller towards the running costs of the community van, which the Council were very appreciative of.

It was noted that a variable direct debit payment has been set up with HM Revenue & Customs to cover payments required in relation to the clerks salary.

The Parish Council have received confirmation that the application to OCC for a community transport grant to support the running costs of the community van has been successful. As they received applications for varying periods of funding and following discussions with the relevant Cabinet Member, to create a level of consistency it is their preference to award grants to all successful applicants which will cover a period of two years. The Parish Council will therefore be awarded a grant of £4,000 to cover two years, which is double the £2,000 applied for to cover a single year.

**24.413.6 For Information: Update on Schoolfield (DB)**

DB provided an update on the sale of the Schoolfield. Two of the three sections put on for auction have sold – one large section behind Shepherds Close and Westlands Avenue plus the small area around the boundary of the Old School House. The third section which has some of the best ridge and furrow is unsold and has been taken off the auction site, although offers can still be given.

The state of the field is variable with two large areas mown and one section overgrown. Currently there are no sheep on the field and there are still issues with dogs off lead.

There are some discussions on-going as to a community project in which money is donated for the purchase of the last section of the field for the purpose of being a community asset.

The Neighbourhood Plan is clear that this field is important to the village and DB raised the question of 'How can we ensure that the majority of the field can continue to be a meadow and be maintained over the years'?

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A meeting is to be held with DB, SD, Roger Evans and James Painter to discuss the future of the bought area of the second portion of the field in terms of maintenance and availability to the public.

The Parish Council responded to the potential buyer of a property on Mill Lane who had enquired on the Councils view of their plans relating to the use of the small holding to the rear to include stables and an equestrian riding arena. The response was drafted utilising the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. To build any structure e.g. stables and to keep horses (not agricultural) would require a change of use for the land. In the Parish Councils view this was a very important piece of land identified in the Neighbourhood Plan as an area to keep open for passive recreational use and therefore the Parish Council would be likely to oppose any change of use. As a response the potential purchaser has withdrawn the offer on the property.

**24.413.7 For Discussion:** Discuss recommendations from the Planning Group on planning applications (SD)

Key planning applications on the planning report were discussed by the Council.

### **Building Applications**

#### **Decisions Received - Permitted**

None

#### **Decisions Received – Refused**

None

#### **Withdrawn**

None

#### **Awaiting Decision**

#### **23/03383/F – 2 Church Close**

Two storey side and rear extensions (re-submission of 23/01872/F)

**Commented**

**24/01136/F - The Old Vicarage Mill Lane** - Renovation of existing detached garage to incorporate first floor home office space

**Commented**

**24/01969/F - Westfield Farm Barn, Shepherds Close** - Proposed replacement porch & alterations to the converted barn and the re-building of a former outbuilding.

**Commented**

**24/01572/AGN – OS Parcel 4658 North Of Shell Filling Station And SW Of The Chequers Part Of A34 by Weston On The Green** - Erection of a General Purpose Agricultural Storage Building (non-livestock). An ecologist has visited site to do a report for CDC.

#### **New Applications**

None

#### **Tree Applications:**

**24/02094/TCA – Milestone Cottage, North Lane** - T1 - Beech, crown raise to create 4.5m clearance for vehicular access. T2 - Oak, poor form, suppressed, Fell. T3 - Weeping Willow, install a 2t brace and cut back to create 1m clearance from the overhead cables. T4 - Cryptomeria, Fell to permit re landscaping. T5 - Cedar, Crown raise to 4m on the main stem to encourage apical dominance.

**24/00722/TCA – Manor Hotel** - T1 x Multi stem Sycamore - (BLUE) overhanging power station/room, to fell; T2 x Poplar - (PINK) damaging wall of moat, to fell.

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**Permitted:****24/01805/TCA** - St Mary The Virgin Church, Church Lane**24/01806/TCA** - Weston On The Green Memorial Hall, Mill Lane**24/01701/TCA** – The Old Vicarage, Mill Lane**24/01700/TCA** – Ladygrass, Church Lane**24/01678/TCA** – Holly House, Church Lane**Action:** SD/Clerk to send appropriate planning replies to Cherwell District Council.**24.413.8 For Discussion:** Parish Council consultation response on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system (DB)

DB provided a presentation to the Council (available on the Parish Council website) providing an overview of planning reform currently being discussed, following the general election win by Labour, and how it could affect the village and what pressures we may come under.

Planning reform will touch all levels of planning. CDC's Local Plan has been delayed whilst awaiting the election results. We have now been asked for information including:

- If required, do you propose to allocate housing sites within the Neighbourhood Plan?
- If you are not proposing to review your Neighbourhood Plan, or you do not wish to allocate sites for housing, would you object to sites within your neighbourhood area being allocated within the emerging local plan if required?

Areas discounted as housing sites by the village in 2015:

- land on the west of the B430
- fields north of the Southfield development (Parish Council won refusal at Appeal)
- all green belt land
- the Schoolfield

In order to provide a comprehensive response or to change anything a consultation with the village would be required in order to put it in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan review.

The proposed reforms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) were published on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024. A consultation is currently being held until 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 which consists of 109 questions covering 15 chapters. It is important that the Council responds as half the parish is in the green belt and currently it is unclear what would be considered grey belt but as a small Council this is a challenging task timewise. The Oxford Green Belt Network has however sent advice and guidance on the responses to 57 Oxfordshire Parish Councils.

DB requested that the Councillors consider the information and hold discussions regarding the Council's responses as they are required before the next Parish Council meeting.

**Action:** Parish Council to submit consultation response to NPPF by 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024.**Action:** Clerk to add Planning Reform 2025 PowerPoint to PC website.**24.413.9 For Information:** Playing field & playground update including:

BL has inspected the playground and is not aware of any new issues with the equipment.

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**For Discussion:** Playdale quote for replacement of spinner in playground.

The quote for replacing the spinner in the playground was discussed alongside the quote for repairing it. Clarification will be sought by BL over the actual cost of repairing the spinner vs replacing and then the best route can be agreed.

**Resolution: To Approve** a spend of £1,368.88 for Playdale to undertake playground equipment repairs identified as being required following 2024 RoSPA inspection report (BL)

BL presented the quote from Playdale for the repairs required to the playground equipment, identified following the July 2024 RoSPA inspection report. The quote does not include the required works to the gate as JM has agreed to investigate it further. BL to send JM the details from the RoSPA inspection report.

The resolution to approve a spend of £1,368.88 for Playdale to undertake playground equipment repairs identified as being required following 2024 RoSPA inspection report was proposed by BL and seconded by TR. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

BL will confirm some of the items e.g. does the quote includes repairing the wooden edging where it is rotting and can they use the wet pour which was left over when the swing sets were installed, however he has approval to spend up to the quote value of £1,368.88.

**Action:** BL to confirm queries over quote from Playdale and authorise repair works with Playdale up to the spend approved.

BL has contacted Ardley FC to check in for the start of the season and to confirm how many sides will play there this season. The invoice for the year will be submitted once this information is confirmed.

**24.413.10 For Information:** Update on village works (JM)

**North Lane Pond:** JM has visited the pond site and is in the process of obtaining quotes to carry out maintenance work. It was noted there will be a green waste levy unless the waste can be deposited somewhere. JM will also investigate the cost to obtain advice and recommendations regarding the pond from the Environment Agency.

**Action:** JM to provide quotes for maintenance works and costings for advice from the Environment Agency regarding the North Lane pond.

**Water flow through village** – JM has been in contact with Jim Calcutt and they will meet at a convenient time to investigate if any works are possible going forwards to aid water flow through the village.

A resident from Southfield commented that whilst the field behind the development has been returned to agricultural land there are a lot of rocks still in it and it is encroaching over the residents side. DB/SD to visit the area.

**Action:** DB/SD to visit Southfield site to investigate the field to the rear of the development prior to sign off of the development.

As previously raised by a resident, JM noted that a sinkhole has formed adjacent to the bridge across the stream at the rear of The Manor and concern was expressed over health and safety. JM to enquire with Paul Beecroft over ownership of the land and then formulate a plan.

**Action:** JM to provide the Council with an update regarding a sinkhole to the rear of The Manor.

Councillor Simpson was welcomed to the meeting.

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**24.413.11 Resolution: To Approve** a spend of up to £500.00 (excl VAT) for four new tyres for the playing field mower (JM)

The Council discussed a quote for four new tyres for the playing field mower. The quote comprised two different costed sets of tyres. JM is also looking to obtain a further quote to see if the cost can be brought down further.

The resolution to approve a spend of up to £500.00 (excl VAT) for four new tyres for the playing field mower was proposed by JM and seconded by BL. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** JM to investigate further if he can reduce the cost of the new tyres for the playing field mower, otherwise he has authorisation to purchase the four new tyres up to a spend of £500.00.

**24.413.12 For Information:** Update from Traffic Calming Advisory Group (DB)

In Graham Barnett's absence DB provided an update from the Traffic Calming Advisory Group. The group are waiting for quotes to be received from OCC's contractors and are looking at booking in a site meeting with one of the new Traffic Officers for Cherwell District. The aim would be to initially obtain a reduction in the speed limit on the B430 with alterations of speed signage and the implementation of flashing speed signals at either end of the village. The parish should receive £5,000 in S106 contributions from the Southfield development.

Councillor Simpson has written to Paul Fermer, OCC Director of Environment and Highways, requesting a site visit to highlight and discuss the various traffic issues on B430 to try and move things forward.

Dates are to be provided to the community Police for future speedwatch sessions so they can attend.

Our area has a new PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) – Kevin Smith – who is keen to visit parishes in the area and the Council will invite him to a future Parish Council meeting.

**Action:** DB/Clerk to invite new PCSO to a future PC meeting.

**24.413.13 Resolution: To Approve** Parish Council accounts for Q1 FY 2024-2025 (TR)

TR presented the Parish Council Q1 accounts for financial year 2024/25 following their approval by the finance advisory group. A summary of expenditure in Q1 vs budget, bank reconciliation and income details were provided.

The income for April – June 2024 was £16,586.23 and included payments for the CDC precept, OCC verge grass agreement, VAT reclaim and bank interest.

There was some notable budgeted expenditure this first quarter (£19,714.11 including VAT) including the renewed play equipment (£11,482.18 including VAT), grass and playing field maintenance, playground cleaning, loan repayment and the Parish Council's insurance premium.

It was noted that a VAT reclaim will be filed after the end of Q2 due to the amount already to be reclaimed this financial year.

The resolution to approve the Parish Council accounts for Q1 FY 2024-25 was proposed by TR and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to upload the Parish Council Q1 accounts (FY 2024/25) to the Parish Council website.

**24.413.14 Resolution: To Approve** Updated Parish Council Financial Regulations 2024-25 (TR)

The resolution to approve the updated Parish Council Financial Regulations 2024-25 was proposed by TR and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to upload the newly approved financial regulations to the Parish Council website.

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**24.413.15 Resolution: To Approve** the following invoices for payment (BL)

BL requested approval of the following invoices detailed in the table below.

PC Ref	Payee	Purpose	Total (incl VAT)	Budget Line	Amount Remaining in 2024-25 Budget
449	Clerk (J Mullane)	Employers' PAYE & National Insurance (HMRC payment)	£5.25	Staff Costs/Clerks salary	£5,390.44
450	WotG Memorial Village Hall	Village Hall hire for ONPA village meeting (12 Oct 2024)	£15.00	Meeting Costs/Hire of Village Hall	£150.00
451	123 Connect Limited	Exchange Clerk Mailbox fee	£167.04	IT/Email server & 365 subscription	£170.01
452*	Oxford Edens	Grass cutting 10/08/24 (playground, stocks/Ben Jonson, bollards, gates)	£655.62	Village Works/Village Contractor Grass Cutting	£1,462.48
453	Slade Estate Services Limited	Monthly maintenance of playing field - August	£424.28	Village Works/Playing Field Maintenance	£1,148.60

\* invoices requested to be paid already

It was noted that invoice PC Ref 452 had already been paid. The resolution to approve the invoices detailed in the table was proposed by BL and seconded by TR. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to update invoice log with approvals.

**Action:** Clerk to initiative request for payments from Councillors and ensure payments authorised.

**24.413.16 For Information:** Update on oak tree footpath (OCC/CDC Councillors)

Councillor Simpson highlighted he had been chasing again for a response to when the method statement will be finalised, apparently it is still with Milestone to amend the terminology of the method statement. He has also written to Gordon Stewart (CDC Chief Executive) and OCC Highway Agreements Engineer Julian Richardson.

The Council agreed that the issue would be raised with the Ombudsman if no further information was available by the end of the week.

**24.413.17 For Information:** Oxfordshire County & Cherwell District Councillor updates (OCC/CDC Councillors)

Councillor Simpson commented that work to incorporate the new Government guidelines into the draft CDC Local Plan has been undertaken. It is expected that Cherwell will have to provide 1,095 new houses a year until 2042. The timeframe was outlined with the draft going for discussion to the Executive in December 2024 followed by an 8 week public consultation over the Christmas period. Councillor Simpson will share the draft Local Plan with parishes when it is available.

DB raised a question with Councillor Simpson regarding the Councillor Priority fund and enquired if he would be interested in supporting an application from the Church to support the installation of technology within the Church following the provision of full fibre by Gigaclear. It would be for the benefit of the wider community, not just the Church users. It was agreed that once costs had been evaluated the request can be discussed further with Councillor Simpson.

**Action:** Application by the Church for technology enhancements to the OCC Councillor Priority fund to be discussed further when costs have been evaluated.

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**24.413.18 For Information:** Parish tree audit report 2024 and **Resolution: To Approve** a spend of up to £1,780.00 (excl VAT) to undertake required treeworks identified in tree audit report (DB)

The parish tree audit report with required works and quote were discussed by the Councillors. It was confirmed that the Parish Council have responsibility for the trees identified as numbers 1, 2, 3, 3.2 and 3.3 at the North Lane duck pond and a quote was to be sought for the works required in this area.

Councillors agreed to proceed with the required treeworks identified for the spinney, oak tree pond and Stocks in the tree audit report.

The resolution to approve a spend of up to £1,780.00 (excl VAT) to undertake required treeworks identified in the tree audit report was proposed by DB and seconded by TR. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

The spend for the treeworks would come under the 'Spinney Maintenance', 'Village Tree Works' and 'Contingency' budget lines, assuming they were carried out in FY 2024-25.

**Action:** Clerk to accept contractors quote for parish treeworks and request a quote for works to the North Lane pond trees.

**24.413.19 For Information:** Update on commercial use of Weston on the Green airfield (DB)

This item had been previously discussed in the Chairs report under item 4.

**24.413.20 Next Parish Council Meeting Date:** Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024, 7.30pm (DB)

**Meeting Closed: 21.40**

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