

WESTON ON THE GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held in Village Hall on Wednesday 5th February 2025

Meeting Number 25.418

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

Public Participation

There was nothing to note.

25.418.1 To Receive: Apologies for non-attendance

Councillors Bohm (DB), Lanham (BL), Davies (SD), Miller (JM) and Aldridge (MA) were in attendance. Councillor Rowan (TR) sent her apologies, which were accepted.

Councillor Coton (Cherwell District Council) attended the first part of the meeting with Councillor Simpson (Oxfordshire County Council) in attendance for the latter part of the meeting.

5 members of the public were in attendance.

25.418.2 To Receive: Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

25.418.3 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th December 2024 (DB)

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th December 2024 were discussed with a minor change to the Development Plan date required under the actions in item 6.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 4th December 2024 was proposed by DB and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council members who were in attendance.

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

25.418.4 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8th January 2025 (DB)

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8th January 2025 were discussed with no changes required.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 8th January 2025 was proposed by DB and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council members who were in attendance.

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

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25.418.5 For Information: Chairs Comment (DB)

DB provided her report to the Council and started by thanking the clerk for all her work preparing for the Internal Audit (to be reported on later in the meeting); the audit is a great deal of work and demands diligence and accuracy. Secondly, we are grateful for the hard work of Tracy, our Finance lead and the clerk, our Responsible Financial Officer, who guides us to operate within regulations and makes sure our processes are in order.

Sadly, tonight we say farewell to Ben Lanham who will resign before our next meeting. Ben took on a big responsibility very quickly once becoming a councillor and had to learn 'on his feet' whilst required to produce monthly reports and keep an eye on all manner of issues at the playing field. He also agreed to step into the role of Vice Chair which has been very helpful to the Council over the past months and will leave a hole in the Parish Council. BL was thanked for all his hard work and insights into issues and wished the best of luck with his move, new job and work towards a PhD.

Finally, DB thanked the council for the support and encouragement received over the past three difficult months whilst her family has had difficulties, it has been much appreciated.

25.418.6 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. A grant of £346.00 had been received from the Midcounties Co-operative to support the installation of a defibrillator at the Jubilee playing field.

The contractor has amended the date of treeworks required in the parish for the Stocks and oak tree pond to Thursday 20th February 2025 (subject to planning approval). Ongoing highways issues have been raised with OCC and the clerk confirmed that the road tax was renewed for the community van on 22nd January 2025.

25.418.7 For Information: Cherwell District Councillor update (CDC Councillor Coton)

Councillor Coton provided the following update:

- **Milestone Lane:** Tony Brummell, CDC drainage expert, visited the site and confirmed the issue was not a land drainage issue but pipework. Councillor Coton will enquire what works were undertaken; the excess water flowing on the verge and B430 has been fixed.

Residents raised their concern over the field with the contractor burying rubbish and filling in streams, water now sits on the field when it wasn't there before. There is considered a destruction of habitat as newts have been found in the area. Residents are to send across photos of the field to DB to pass on to Councillor Coton.

Councillor Coton has discussed the issue with the head of CDC Enforcement, Jane Law, and is waiting to hear back, she will enquire again.

Residents requested an update on the adoption of the road and were informed this is an OCC matter which could be bought up with Councillor Simpson.

- **CDC Draft Local Plan consultation:** this is currently ongoing and has been extended until 25th February 2025. CDC are keen to have the Local Plan in place until a new unitary authority is potentially formed. There are concerns over Cherwell's housing supply as it currently stands at 2.3 years (not the required 5 years).

- **Devolution:** OCC are still to hold elections in May 2025. Oxfordshire is not in the first tranche of authorities, it is likely to be in the second tranche so the first shadow elections could be held in 2027, with the creation of the unitary authority in 2028.

DB queried if Parish Councils were consulted regarding devolution. Councillor Coton confirmed that the Government only gave a three month turnaround to express an interest and it was a surprise for the district and county councils. Councillor Coton will feedback to CDC about the lack of consultation and enquire if there are plans to consult with the public now that potentially Oxfordshire will be in tranche two.

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- **Puy du Fou, Bucknell:** second consultation being held 6-8th February 2025 in Bicester, Banbury and Bucknell. It was highlighted that at the presentation provided by Puy du Fou the traffic was to be directed via Junction 10 of M40, reportedly some of the recent media reports have quoted Junction 9 instead. Councillor Coton will enquire on this at the consultation.

- **Siemans site, off A41:** no current improvements are planned on J9. Tritax Symmetry are proposing a second phase with potentially 13 more units; within those plans money should be available for Junction 9 improvements. No land has been set aside. SD commented that there is a tiny section of ancient protected woodland which might be in the location of an additional lane.

JM asked Councillor Coton to check if the net environmental gain will be at this site or somewhere else in the country.

25.418.8 For Discussion: Update on village works and I Dig Trees project donation to spinney/playing field (DB/JM)

David Williams attended the meeting to talk through the I Dig Trees project for the donation of trees to the parish. The Council thanked David for all his efforts in obtaining the trees and highlighted that it made such a difference to the feeling of community spirit.

David has experience of planting many trees over the years. Currently c70 trees have been planted in the village, including some to the back of The Manor.

It was suggested that some new trees could be a benefit to the Milestone Lane development, to replace some of the trees which had either not been planted or had died through mismanagement by the administrators appointed grounds contractor. David will liaise with the residents to discuss what trees are best and a suitable location.

The spinney requires some clearance in the centre, a contractor clears the edges onto the playing field. A work party would be helpful to help clear brambles before bird nesting season starts in March. DB will work with David to co-ordinate some volunteers.

David will consider what trees would be suitable to plant in the spinney and on the playing field, along with a replacement tree for the Queens Jubilee. Advice on future felling and suitability has also been requested from Bicester Tree Services.

David currently has the trees planted in his vegetable patch and asked if he could use an area in the spinney as a nursery so he could plant out trees in rows and then plant them on when ready. This was agreeable to the Council.

David also highlighted that he had applied for c240 more trees/bushes from The Woodland Trust; these would be lower growing trees/pollinators which could be located beneath the canopy e.g. dog roses. There is no guarantee he will get them but he was thanked for all his hard work and support for the village.

Action: DB to work with David Willaims regarding a volunteer work party to help clear some of the spinney before March.

25.418.9 For Information: Playing field and playground update including summary of Parish Council playground inspection requirements (BL)

As far as BL is aware there are no other new issues with the playground since the repairs were undertaken in December 2024. The Council playground inspection documents were noted.

BL confirmed that liaison with Ardley United FC will be passed over to the clerk.

The issue of moles on the playing field was highlighted. The clerk will seek advice from the Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association.

Action: Clerk to undertake some research on mole activity and source advice from the Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association.

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25.418.10 Resolution To Approve quote by contractor Slade Estates to undertake monthly playing field maintenance during 2025, at a monthly rate of £360.71+VAT (BL)

The resolution to approve a quote by contractor Slade Estates to undertake monthly playing field maintenance during 2025, at a monthly rate of £360.71+VAT was proposed by BL and seconded by JM. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to contact Slade Estates to accept quote provided for 2025 maintenance of the playing field.

25.418.11 For Discussion & Resolution To Approve a spend of up to £2,695.00 excluding VAT to purchase a defibrillator for the playing field car park as detailed in the summary report (BL)

An action from the Parish Councils 2024/25 budget was the option to install a defibrillator at the playing field. This has been investigated, taking into account the difficulty that there is no power to support the heating of the unit.

A solar powered cabinet was researched. Community Heartbeat, who installed a unit at the Village Hall, confirmed that they found the solar units to be unreliable but technology has been created now so you can have a thermal bagged unit without the need for a power source, however this is not widely available. Community Heartbeat provided the solution equipment and a quote, other companies were then researched for advice and as a comparison. A report on the options was circulated to Councillors for discussion.

The quote from Community Heartbeat reflected a total cost for a defibrillator, cabinet, post, delivery, training (free) and signage of £2,695.00 (excl VAT).

The VAT can temporarily be allocated to the contingency budget line and can then be reclaimed in the next quarter.

Total funding in the Parish Council bank account for the defibrillator stands at £2,711.00 comprising:

- ❖ Parish Council Reserves Allocated Funding - £1,500.00
- ❖ Midcounties Co-operative grant (received 17/01/25) - £346.00
- ❖ OCC Councillor Priority Fund (historic re-allocated funding) - £865.00

The Finance Advisory Group and Playing Field lead have reviewed the quotes and it is proposed that the quote from Community Heartbeat is accepted as the most suitable and viable option for the project, providing a quality tested product alongside advice, training and ongoing maintenance support.

The resolution to approve a spend of up to £2,695.00 excluding VAT to purchase a defibrillator for the playing field car park as detailed in the summary report was proposed by BL and seconded by JM. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to contact Community Heartbeat to accept quote provided.

25.418.12 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

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Decisions Received – Prior Approval Not Required**24/03060/AGN** (related to 24/01572/AGN) – **OS Parcel 4658 North of Shell Filling Station and SW of the Chequers**

Erection of a General Purpose Agricultural Storage Building (non-livestock).

Decisions Received – Refused**24/01136/F - The Old Vicarage, Mill Lane**

Renovation of existing detached garage to incorporate first floor home office space.

Withdrawn

None

Awaiting Decision**24/02685/F – Southview, Northampton Road**

Infill extension to existing bungalow and addition of first floor. Erection of garage and store with room in loft, including demolition of existing pole barn.

24/03356/PIP - Land North East Of Knowle Farm, Knowle Lane

Planning Permission in Principle is sought for the provision of 2-4 dwellings.

Commented

New Applications**25/00142/CLUE - North View, North Lane**

Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Development for domestic car parking area for two vehicles. Comments due by 21/02/25.

As per the previous decision by CDC, this is considered not to be in keeping with the Neighbourhood Plan's vision of preserving verges as green space.

25/00139/F – Part of OS Parcel 0006 Adjacent and North of Normandy, North Lane

Demolition of existing buildings and the erection of five detached single and two-storey dwellings together with access, parking and garaging, amenity space, landscaping and drainage works. Comments due by 06/03/25.

This issue has been discussed at previous Council meetings and was discussed again by the Council. Additional comments at the meeting included concerns about the footpath location (immediately adjacent to the application site) and the impact of the development on its sustainability as it has been badly affected by surface water runoff from the Stoneyfield site and this could be exacerbated by further development and incorrect references to a hotel mentioned in the proposal. The reference to the Weston on the Green community bus indicating that it is available to transport people everywhere, where in fact the community bus, which is part funded by donations, services transport to GP surgeries, hospitals and other essential appointments and not to hairdressers or shopping destinations and therefore should not be included in the proposal as a public transport resource; and the submission for 2 storey houses instead of the previously discussed 1.5 storeys (at a presentation made by the developer to the Parish Council) which was seen by the Council as being crucial to minimise loss of open views to the north. It was also noted that North Lane was quoted as having a 30mph speed limit with calculations on the width of the entrance to be based on the 30mph speed limit, where in fact the speed limit on North Lane is continuous with the B430 (40mph at the moment).

A housing assessment report (HELAA 2024) identified that the land could be developed but not by using access from North Lane, the suggestion being to use the access from Milestone Lane which connects to the B430 directly. It was noted that a 40% ransom strip has been established at the edge of the Milestone Lane development on the sale of the land in favour of a third party, which meant this access point was not being considered by the developer.

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Concern was also raised that the cumulative effect of increased traffic on the lane with two housing developments opposite each other (4 new dwellings on the Reynard's Lodge site are approved) should be taken into account.

The Parish Council Planning Group plans to meet within the week to discuss a formal response to the proposal to be lodged with CDC.

Tree Applications

25/00124/TCA - Bramley Cottage, Mill Lane

Remove apple tree. Replacement of the same variety already planted.

25/00039/TCA - Street Record North Lane

Tree management in streetscape of the village – North Lane, Stocks

Action: SD/Clerk to send appropriate planning replies to Cherwell District Council.

SD commented on the review of the draft CDC Local Plan as there have been a few changes since the hard copy had been received.

The categorisation of villages had been reviewed, Weston on the Green was still categorised as a category C village, which places it outside the statutory requirement for housing.

Concerns were raised about the amount of development in the wider area around Bicester, most of the strategic housing and employment sites are concentrated around Bicester. Ten years ago the majority of sites were around Banbury, this has the potential to create further transport issues for Weston on the Green.

The plan has still not acknowledged or shown on the maps either the Great Wolf development or the potential large Puy du Fou development site.

SD has offered to hold a separate meeting to brief the Councillors on current key planning points.

25.418.13 **For Information:** Milestone Lane development update (DB/SD)

Resolution To Approve spend of up to £500 to provide amenities for the new development at Milestone Lane (DB)

The update on the Milestone Lane development had been covered earlier in the meeting.

The resolution to approve a spend of up to £500 to provide amenities for the new development at Milestone Lane was proposed by DB and seconded by MA. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Requirements over what is required at the new development will be investigated further and any amendments required will be brought back to the Council.

Action: Clerk to investigate purchase options for Milestone Lane amenities and add any further discussion required to a future council meeting.

25.418.14 **For Information:** Update from Traffic Calming Action Group (MA)

MA / Graham Barnett confirmed that there had been no further update on the 30mph speed limit on B430. A meeting of the traffic group is to be held to formulate a plan about how to progress with OCC.

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25.418.15 Resolution To Approve renewal of community van insurance for 8 February 2025 – 7 February 2026 at a total cost of £1,071.99 following a review of provided quotes (BL)

The insurance quotes obtained for the community van for 2025-26 were discussed by the Council. The Council considered the QBE quote (via broker Howdens) to be the most suitable option and is a continuation of the existing insurance cover. It was noted that any drivers over 70 would be required to be named on the policy.

The resolution to approve the renewal of the community van insurance for 8 February 2025 – 7 February 2026 at a total cost of £1,071.99, following a review of provided quotes, was proposed by BL and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to inform insurance brokers of decision over insurance of community van and organise payment of the new insurance cover.

25.418.16 Resolution To Approve Parish Council financial accounts covering Q3 2024-2025 (TR report/DB)

The Parish Council Q3 accounts for financial year 2024/25 were presented to the Council following their approval by the finance advisory group. A summary of expenditure in Q3 vs budget, bank reconciliation and income details were provided. TR provided a written report to the Council highlighting there was an income of £8,121.61, comprising some large scale grants for the community van, the VAT claim from HMRC, rent from Ardley United FC and some bank interest. Expenditure in Q3 totalled £8,682.43, mainly consisting of grass cutting, maintenance, salaries, donation and the loan repayment.

Despite the bank balance being £3,464.43 more than at the beginning of the year, we need to remember that £4,500 already received in income relates to grant funding to cover future costs for the community van scheme and we have committed expenditure of £821.33 for the playground repairs, plus planned spend of up to £1,500 for Milestone Lane and the cost for new defibrillator of £2,695 plus VAT.

The resolution to approve the Parish Council accounts covering Q3 FY 2024-25 was proposed by DB and seconded by BL. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to upload the Parish Council Q3 accounts (FY 2024/25) to the Parish Council website.

25.418.17 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 Line
476*	Peter Collins	North Lane pond ecologist consultation visit & report	£165.00	Contingency	£1,957.47
477	Clerk (J Mullane)	Stationery: Printer paper, ink, wallets & envelopes (Amazon)	£55.79	Sundries/Administration & printing costs	£119.78
478	Clerk (J Mullane)	Community bus vehicle road tax (DVLA)	£305.00	Village Works/Community Bus Scheme	£1,590.15
479	Graham Barnett	Fuel for community van (Tesco)	£57.16	Village Works/Community Bus Scheme	£1,285.15
480	Graham Barnett	Additional non remote keys x3 for community van (Timpson)	£178.00	Village Works/Community Bus Scheme	£1,227.99
481	Clerk (J Mullane)	Plants & soil for planters (Homebase)	£17.00	Village Works/General Village Maintenance	£9.08
482	Community First Oxfordshire	Membership subscription 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025	£55.00	Subscriptions/CFO	£55.00
483	Fair Account	Provision of interim audit service (04/23 to 12/23)	£300.00	Insurance & Auditing/Audit Fees	£283.00

* invoices already been paid

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It was confirmed that Invoice ref 476 to Peter Collins had already been paid. The resolution to approve the invoices detailed in the table was proposed by BL and seconded by MA. 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.

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

Councillor Simpson has been in touch with Paul Fermer, OCC Director of Environment and Highways, who has contacted Scott White, OCC Senior Officer Highway Operations, regarding Milestone developments for the oak tree footpath removal.

The works are back in the hands of Milestone. The method statement has been approved and we are waiting for the works to get onto the contractor works list.

25.418.19 For Information: Oxfordshire County & Cherwell District Councillors updates (OCC/CDC Councillors)

Councillor Simpson confirmed that county elections are taking place on 1st May 2025.

He went on to discuss devolution (as covered above), along with concerns over if the Cherwell Local Plan will get approved. With only a 2.3 year housing supply Cherwell is in a difficult position over development in the area.

Councillor Simpson also noted that he will chase the OCC officers regarding the 30mph speed limit reduction application on B430.

25.418.20 For Information: Interim internal auditor feedback report covering April-December 2024 (DB/Clerk)

The clerk highlighted the key points from the internal auditors interim report which covered the period April-December 2024.

The overall internal control procedures are adequate to meet the needs of the AGAR Practitioner's Guide 2024 and the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015. A series of test checks on the Council's financial records, vouchers, documents, minutes, policies, insurance and assets register were performed to ascertain efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's systems.

Recommendations and advice provided will be considered by the Finance Advisory Group. A cyber insurance quote was obtained by the Council in November 2024 (£405) but was considered too costly vs the risk; MA has previously agreed to provide some advice on Council security and this will be booked in for March. Delegated powers to the clerk will be reviewed in May 2025. The end of year internal audit is booked for 14th May 2025.

Action: Clerk to compile the end of year financial accounts and AGAR supporting information in time to send to the internal auditor for review on 14th May 2025.

25.418.21 Resolution: To Approve the appointment of an independent reviewer of Parish Council accounts for FY 2024-2025 (DB)

As part of its internal financial control the Parish Council appoints an independent reviewer of its financial accounts. DB proposed that Councillor Miller be appointed for FY 2024-2025.

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The resolution to approve Councillor Miller as an independent reviewer of the Parish Council accounts for FY 2024-2025 was proposed by DB and seconded by BL. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to discuss 2024-25 financial account information with Councillor Miller for independent inspection.

25.418.22 **Next Parish Council Meeting Date:** Wednesday 5th March 2025, 7.30pm (DB)

Meeting Closed: 21.41

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