

WESTON ON THE GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held in Village Hall on Wednesday 8th January 2025

Meeting Number 25.417

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

Public Participation

Patsy Parsons thanked the Parish Council for the donation provided to help fund the Village Hall hire for the Neighbours Natter group.

25.417.1 To Receive: Apologies for non-attendance

Councillors Lanham (BL), Davies (SD) and Rowan (TR) were in attendance with BL chairing the meeting. Councillors Bohm (DB), Miller (JM) and Aldridge (MA) sent their apologies, which were accepted.

Councillor Coton (Cherwell District Council) and Councillor Simpson (Oxfordshire County Council) were both in attendance.

6 members of the public were in attendance.

25.417.2 To Receive: Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

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

This item was deferred until 5th February 2025 Parish Council meeting as BL had not been in attendance at the December meeting and therefore the motion was not quorate.

Action: Clerk to add approval of 4th December 2024 Parish Council meeting minutes to the 5th February 2025 Parish Council meeting agenda.

25.417.4 For Information: Chairs Comment

BL commented that the December food bank collection had been well supported.

The council are currently working on comments for the response to the draft Cherwell Local Plan consultation which closes on 14th February 2025.

25.417.5 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. Payments received included bank interest of £149.50 to cover the period 2nd September – 1st December 2024.

Ongoing highways issues raised with OCC will be followed up following the Christmas break.

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The interim internal audit will be undertaken with Paul Reynolds from Fair Account on 15th January 2025. A report will be shared with the Council and actions undertaken ahead of the end of year financial review.

The contractor has pencilled in treeworks required in the parish for:

- Spinney works: Thursday 9th January 2025
- The Stocks and oak tree pond: Thursday 23rd January 2025

The information has been placed on the Councils website and facebook page.

25.417.6 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 – 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.

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.

New Applications

24/03356/PIP - Land North East Of Knowle Farm Knowle Lane Weston On The Green

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

Following discussions between councillors following the notification of the application the Parish Council submitted a comment to say in principle they would object to an application. The site is Greenbelt land and is an important part of the village (identified in the Neighbourhood Plan as a valuable green space but not designated as one).

Various concerns were raised: the site is on a no through single track lane where the access will be restricted, drainage and nearby barn owls nesting were all discussed alongside ongoing pressures on the surrounding infrastructure.

It is also considered unjustifiable to develop the land when the village does not need this sort of proposed development, although no specific plans are being considered yet the village requires smaller houses more suitable for young families and it was felt this development would be unlikely to deliver that.

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Tree Applications

24/02094/TCA Milestone Cottage - permitted

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

25.417.7 For Information: Milestone Lane development update (BL)

BL provided an outline of an e-mail received by the Parish Council from the Milestone Lane resident committee, which provided an update on various matters and issues relating to the development.

The Parish Council has agreed to provide a notice board for the development, if this is desired, and will undertake a review of benches in the village to see if one can be relocated to the play area.

The Parish Council will also provide some information regarding insurance for the play area.

Action: Clerk to support in sourcing items for new Milestone Land development.

Councillor Coton (CDC) confirmed that the development has not been signed off yet i.e. that the site has been completed in accordance with the approved drawings and specifications.

The main issue of concern relates to the land drain at the entrance of the development, the ownership of which is unclear as it does not show on any of the house plans. The land drain is designed to flow out through a pipe to the main drain system; at the moment this area is not functioning correctly and the B430 is continually covered in water. This issue has been exacerbated recently due to the cold temperatures leading to icy conditions on the road and pavement and has been reported via Fix My Street. The developer arranged for the field to be landscaped in 2024, this is considered to have been undertaken incorrectly, natural drainage paths have been removed and it is believed that this is causing the excessive surface drainage to the land drain structure. The harris fencing surrounding the land drain is loose and there are safety concerns regarding this too.

Councillor Coton (CDC) will raise these concerns directly with the head of CDC Enforcement, Jane Law, and with CDC Land Drainage officer, Tony Brumell. DB will be copied into correspondence received.

Councillor Simpson will follow up the issues regarding the highway directly with OCC Highways as an immediate matter of concern.

The resident committee queried if there was any section 106 money available to support the required rectifications? Councillor Simpson responded by explaining that section 106 money is collected at trigger points during a development. Initial funding would have been collected for highway works but the vast majority of the money is collected towards the end of the development and as the developer went into administration a reduced amount would have been available. Councillors Simpson and Coton will inquire how much was gathered from the developer and maybe remaining.

It was reported by the residents that the administrators, Moorfields and the bank are looking to submit a planning application for phase two of the development to apply for up to 130 dwellings in the adjacent field as they need to recoup £12m in lost funds.

SD confirmed that this is still not a site that the Parish Council is interested in developing, nothing has changed since a previous planning application was rejected at appeal. When the new CDC Local Plan is signed off, Weston on the Green will be categorised as a smaller village, where any development should be of modest size. The scale of 130 houses is out of proportion and would not be supported by the Neighbourhood Plan.

25.417.8 For Information: Playing field and playground update (BL)

As far as BL is aware there are no other new issues with the playground since the repairs were undertaken in December.

The playground gate has been fixed by JM.

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BL confirmed that all playground equipment should be fixed by Playdale to validate ongoing warranties, the gates and fencing are excluded from this.

Treeworks in the spinney are to commence 9th January 2025.

The increase in mole activity on the playing field was noted. BL will enquire whether Ardley United FC have undertaken a pitch report to send to the FA to see if any support/funding in improving the pitch is available. This may encompass the mole issue, currently Ardley FC squash the mole hills and top up with topsoil.

Action: BL to enquire if Ardley United FC have undertaken a pitch report and sent it to the FA.

25.417.9 For Information: Update on village works

The Parish Council received a fantastic offer of some free trees obtained by a resident, David Williams, via the TCV / I Dig Trees initiative (<https://www.tcv.org.uk/i-dig-trees-free-trees/>). David has obtained 300 trees including bamboo canes and eco wrap guards for the parish. The mix of trees included common oak, green beech, hazel, silver birch, alder, hornbeam, rowan and field maple.

Some residents have highlighted areas they may like to put them and the Parish Council can utilise them in the spinney and around the playing field, this will be beneficial given the loss of some trees in the spinney due to ash die back. Volunteers would be required to help support planting and maintenance.

The Council agreed this was a great initiative and were absolutely delighted with the offer, they thanked David for all his hard work and support.

Action: Clerk to email David Williams to confirm the council's interest in receiving some of the trees for the playing field.

Action: Clerk to add I Dig Trees project to 5th February 2025 Parish Council meeting agenda for discussion.

25.417.10 Resolution To Approve Parish Council budget for FY 2025-2026 (TR)

TR confirmed that the budget for financial year 2025/26 was initially presented and discussed fully at the December 2024 Parish Council meeting.

The Council has since received the estimated tax base from CDC and a revised budget has been drafted which included some minor tweaks and a reduction in the Contingency line to 4.5%. TR highlighted that the budget has once again had to absorb increases in costs across the board.

The revised budget had been approved by the Finance Advisory Group (which includes the chair, DB) prior to the meeting.

At the end of a financial year the Council provides information on its reserve funds and allocates the reserves to specific projects in the parish e.g. traffic, footpaths. Some of these projects are slow in moving forwards due to limitations of waiting for responses from District and County Councils but the money is held in reserve to be utilised when they can proceed.

The resolution to approve the Parish Council budget for FY 2025/26 was proposed by TR and seconded by BL. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to upload approved PC Budget FY 2025-26 to the Parish Council website.

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25.417.11 Resolution: To Approve Parish Council precept request for FY 2025-2026 (TR)

Cherwell District Council have confirmed they would ideally like the precept request to be submitted by 12th January 2025.

The clerk informed the Council that the tax base information provided by CDC is currently in draft format and it could alter following approval by CDC.

The 2025/26 precept to be requested by Weston on the Green Parish Council is £28,702.57. According to the draft figures provided by CDC this would equate to a 7.3% increase (£0.59/month) in council tax paid by Tax band D households during the next financial year (2025/26).

The resolution to approve the Parish Council Precept request of £28,702.57 for financial year 2025/26, based on the budget approved under item 25.417.10 was proposed by TR and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to submit the precept request for Weston on the Green Parish Council to CDC by 12th January 2025.

Action: Clerk to highlight to Councillors if CDC notify the PC of any alterations to the tax base figures.

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

Councillor Simpson has chased yet again on the removal of the oak tree footpath and has been informed there is now a hold up as some reports require checking as they are now out of date. He will raise the issue again with the CDC Chief Executive.

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

Update from Councillor Coton (CDC):

Highlighted three large consultations currently being undertaken which would affect the district:

- **CDC Local Plan consultation** – closes 14th February 2025: <https://cherwell.citizenspace.com/planning-policy/cherwell-local-plan-review-2042/>
- **Botley West Solar Farm** – a register of interest is now live until 27th February 2025: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/project-search>
- **East West Rail** – proposal to close the London Road level crossing, considering two options to provide an accessible replacement crossing for pedestrians, cyclists and other users. Road traffic would be re-routed via existing roads, with local road improvements to reduce travel time. Consultation closes 24th January 2025: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024>

Action: Clerk to ensure this information is available via the Parish Council website and facebook page.

Update from Councillor Simpson (OCC):

- **Devolution:** the County Council are considering registering an interest with the government to create a unitary authority for Oxfordshire alongside a combined mayoral authority. Reportedly all districts/parties are keen to proceed with devolution to create a more efficient system. The deadline is 10th of January 2025 and if it is approved by government then County Council elections, which are due to take place in May 2025, may be postponed. Information will be shared with parishes once available.
- **Budget:** this is expected to be at a maximum increase due to the increase in NI payments.

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- **B430 speed limit:** new 30mph speed limit approved and confirmed by OCC, they should now proceed directly with the application.

25.417.14 For Information: Update from Traffic Calming Action Group (Graham Barnett, GB)

GB confirmed that OCC had approved the 30mph speed reduction on B430 and can proceed with the application.

GB went on to provide an update on the Speedwatch programme which is continuing but has been limited again due to the weather. There has been some more positive feedback from the Community Speedwatch scheme and they have provided up-to-date figures. The Weston on the Green speed watch team had been concerned over whether letters were going out on time. According to these figures, between July to December 2024, 607 letters were sent out following the speed watch teams reporting in Weston on the Green.

There is a new procedure for sending out letters which came into effect at the beginning of December 2024. Letters are due to go out within 14 days of the vehicle speed being reported. There will be three graduated letters for repeat offenders and potential for police visits following multiple offenses.

25.417.15 Resolution: To Approve the following invoices for payment (TR)

TR 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
474	WotG Memorial Village Hall	Village Hall hire for PC meetings (Jan-March 25)	£45.00	Meeting Costs/Hire of Village Hall	£135.00
475	Playdale Playgrounds Ltd	Playground repairs - final payment	£821.33	Contingency	£2,778.80

The resolution to approve the invoices detailed in the table was proposed by TR and seconded by BL. 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.

25.417.16 Resolution: To Approve updated Parish Council Asset Register (TR)

The resolution to approve the updated Parish Council Asset Register was proposed by TR and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to add updated asset register to the Parish Council website.

25.417.17 Next Parish Council Meeting Date: Wednesday 5th February 2025, 7.30pm (BL)

TR provided her apologies in advance for the February meeting. The discussion by MA regarding cyber security will potentially be moved to the March agenda, along with an update on the community van usage and costs.

Action: Clerk to add cybersecurity discussion and community van update to the March PC meeting agenda.

Meeting Closed: 20.44

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