

WESTON ON THE GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held in Village Hall on Wednesday 4th June 2025

Meeting Number 25.424

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

Public Participation

A resident raised concerns over the vegetation overhanging the footpath on B430 which impeding both the footpath and cycle path.

It was advised that the issue should be placed on Fix My Street and an enquiry made with the neighbouring landowner.

Action: Footpath/cyclepath issues on B430 to be reported on Fix My Street.

25.424.1 To Receive: Apologies for non-attendance

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

Councillor Gordon (Oxfordshire County Council) was in attendance for the meeting.

Councillor Coton (Cherwell District Council) sent her apologies.

3 members of the public were in attendance.

25.424.2 To Receive: Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations to note for this meeting.

25.424.3 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 7th May 2025 (DB)

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 7th May 2025 were discussed with no changes required.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 7th May 2025 was proposed by DB and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

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

25.424.4 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th May 2025 (DB)

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th May 2025 were discussed with no changes required.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 7th May 2025 was proposed by DB and seconded by JM. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

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

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25.424.5 For Information: Chair report (DB)

DB highlighted the ongoing and increased pressures on Councillors and the Council to understand the changes occurring in the planning world, it requires a lot of time to disseminate and digest all the information.

As a village we are aware of the need to participate in growth but also to respect our history. Villages have landscapes to protect which requires a full team effort against increased pressures from developers.

The Government asked for proposals to simplify local government. Councils have launched public engagement exercises on the different options for a unitary authority. Each council that put forward an option will be launching a proposal, meaning there will be three running.

- District Council proposal (two councils) https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/corporate-services/two-councils/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR5c50Yf8-zRhsYdXRktGoRhakxl5hmCC1G7Pv0QuDfQYJYDGEy2qL6Z2-5LDA_aem_YTB1GkSooUon87iMcwNHFA
- Oxford City (greater Oxford council) https://greateroxford.org/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR4QChaAU9GQvniYB5s_H3IK7I8DI_YK5rS-j-k6ZoJDSxDp9p2WAA-PMxHkaIQ_aem_kiS6ziRP_x37nZQzGKVEQg
- OCC's public engagement document still to be launched.

This item is to be fully discussed at the Cherwell parish liaison meeting next week which DB will attend.

DB will also attend an event titled '*Working together, local housing can be different*' on 10th June 2025.

25.424.6 For Information: Clerk report (Clerk)

The clerks report to the Council was noted which confirmed payments from the Parish Council bank account including payments relating to the monthly clerk salary and the latest instalment of the loan repayment to PWLB (£922.37) obtained to purchase the playing field and spinney.

Confirmation that Councillor Miller has checked the Parish Council Financial Accounts to end Q4 FY 2024/25 and has signed the bank statements and bank reconciliation documents.

The clerk also confirmed that the insurance renewal invoice for £522.57 has been paid to Clear Councils to provide cover for the Parish Council until 31st May 2026.

The Village Hall have requested permission to use the playing field for the annual village fireworks event to be held on Saturday 1st November 2025, which was agreed.

OCC have confirmed that unfortunately the Parish Council were not successful with their expression of interest application for the OCC Priority Action flood project funding.

Tony Brummell, Building Control & Flood Risk Manager at CDC, visited the 'sink hole' and collapsed culvert with the clerk. He will now take the matter forward and try and resolve the issue as it appears a new pipe will be required linking the two drainage ditches.

It appears that OCC and their contractor have done a more thorough job of filling in potholes on Bletchingdon Road. Whilst not a full resurface, as has been seen on larger roads in the county, it is a vast improvement and will save some considerable time in reporting them for a period. A thank you has been sent to OCC Highways Engagement team.

25.424.7 To Note: Playing field and playground inspection report (Clerk)

The playground inspection report undertaken by the clerk was noted, no new major defects to the equipment were identified. Additional soil needs to be added around some of the surface edging at the playground and the clerk is aware that some litter bins need emptying, including the dog bin so will monitor and action as required.

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The concern over logs/rocks being used in the stream by the picnic area, blocking the flow of the chalk stream appears to have ceased for now. The clerk removed a lot of wood and relocated rocks and the council thanked David Williams for any discussions he has held.

The moles also seem happier and causing less damage in recent weeks.

The clerk has contacted Ardley FC regarding next season, pitch re-seeding and to discuss a request for use of the pitch by a resident.

25.424.8 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

25/00931/F – Oak View, Northampton Road

Single storey replacement of porch extension.

25/00660/DISC – Forge Farm

Discharge of condition 4 (metal sheeting).

Decisions Received – Refused

None

Withdrawn

None

Awaiting Decision

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. **Commented**

25/00449/REM - Reynards Lodge, North Lane

Reserved Matters application to 24/00804/OUT - Access (with Construction Traffic Management Plan), Layout (with part drainage), Scale, Appearance, Landscaping and Biodiversity (with Construction Environment Management Plan). **Commented**

25/00356/DISC - Kelberg Ltd, Northampton Road

Discharge of Conditions 3 (construction management strategy), 4 (Arboricultural Method Statement), 5 (surface water drainage), 6 (biodiversity method statement) and 8 (lighting details) of 24/00893/F. **Commented**

25/00582/F and 25/00583/LB - Williams Cottage, North Lane

Demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of replacement single-storey outbuilding, garden shed and associated landscaping.

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25/00418/F and 25/00486/LB – The Manor Hotel, Northampton Road

Restoration and extension of Rupert’s Cottage to provide additional guest accommodation and leisure facilities; re-instatement of the former outdoor swimming pool; construction of a new events pavilion; restaurant extension within the Manor’s west courtyard; relocation of guest car parking away from the Manor’s principal elevation; screening of the existing plant and biomass boiler area; restoration of wider landscape features including the historic moat and bridge.

Commented

New Applications

25/01127/F – Summer Court, North Lane

Demolish existing side extension and erect two storey side and single storey rear extension.

Tree Applications

25/01213/TCA – Cruck Cottage, Northampton Road

Poplar: reduce south-western canopy 2-2.5m from branch tips Oak group (highlighted pink on map) cut back canopies over lawn side and oil storage 2.5-3m from branch tips.

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

25.424.9 For Discussion: Update following meeting with Puy du Fou and consideration over a coalition with neighbouring Parishes (DB/SD)

SD and DB held a meeting with Puy du Fou representatives, including International Director David Nouaille, on 14th May 2025.

SD provided an overview of the scheme, developments and issues – the full report can be found on the Parish Council website.

Proposed timeline for the development outlined:

- July 2024: First public consultation held
- February 2025: Second public consultation held
- Summer 2025: Outline planning application to be submitted
- Winter 2025: Local authority decision expected
- 2025-26: Reserved matters applications expected
- 2026: potential start on site

There is strong support for the scheme from OCC, CDC and national government with strong antagonism from a North Oxfordshire Residents Association.

Key issues raised:

1. Traffic
2. Energy
3. Water management
4. Staffing model

Public consultations are now completed, it was considered that there would be limited opportunities now to have any major impact on the decision as the project has national drive and it would now rest with CDC. The Parish Council will be a consultee for the application when it is lodged and will be looking for a contribution towards both public transport and traffic management solutions in the parish.

A resident queried the impact on local dark skies. DB responded that they are aware it’s a dark sky area; their light displays tend to be laser with any fireworks tending not to be too high. When they build the villages they bank them up

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so light heads inwards not outwards. It was also commented that there is already considerable light pollution from other nearby settlements including Bicester.

DB outlined a joint letter from two Parish Councils (Bucknell & Stoke Lyne) asking the parish to join in a campaign/coalition against Puy du Fou if as a Parish Council we are minded to object.

Councillors commented that traffic is the major concern as it can get very grid locked with issues now, there was also no mention of the Universal Studios development in Bedford with expected increased traffic flows on the A421. However, it was also noted that with vegetation and banking the site will not be as visible as first considered.

DB summarised the position of the Council indicating they were not in position to answer the letter yet and wished to time for further consideration and the views of Councillor Aldridge to be heard.

Action: DB to contact Bucknell & Stoke Lyne PCs, thanking them for the letter and saying the Council are considering the issue further before responding.

25.424.10 For Discussion: Update on village works (JM)

JM has held a meeting with the new owners of Stonehouse Farm – two brothers, Jack and Charlie Colebrooke, to explain about the issues with the weir. The owners were fully supportive and positive about taking things forward and requested they were kept fully informed regarding information being sent off to Natural England and the Environment Agency regarding the SSSI site. They also hope to do some clearing up and down stream. With their permission the Council will investigate the next steps to either submit information or request a meeting.

Action: Clerk to provide previous information regarding submitting an application for works at Weston Fen.

As mentioned above the sink hole and broken pipe issue, located adjacent to the Oxfordshire Way, is being followed up with CDC.

JM has held a meeting with a company regarding connecting electricity to the playing field. They will dig out plans of the mains electrics through the housing estate instead of accessing it via a transformer on the poles and price accordingly.

John Roper and JM are to meet to investigate where water supply and electricity connections are in relation to Gallosbrook Way/playing field. It was also noted that Stuart Beecroft may be able to support with plans of electrical and waste supplies in the area.

JM also kindly offered to attend to the grass verges in the village in the next week or two and the Council thanked him for his work.

25.424.11 For Information: Update from Traffic Calming Action Group including information on B430 speed reduction consultation (Graham Barnett, GB)

GB highlighted that the OCC public consultation on the speed limit reduction on B430 was now live until 20th June 2025. The consultation highlights that the 40mph speed limit will extend beyond the edge of the village towards the airfield and finish beyond the Akeman Street crossroads.

DB indicated there had been some concern from residents over the speed limit on the adjoining lanes going to be highlighted as 30mph. GB confirmed that there would be no extra signage on the lanes to indicate their speed limit. As is the current situation their speed limit will be same as the B430 and therefore no new signage is required. This additional point may require further clarity to any villagers that ask.

There were no further comments from the Councillors; the Parish Council will therefore submit a response in support of the consultation.

Action: SD/Clerk to submit a response from the PC to the OCC B430 speed reduction consultation.

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25.424.12 Resolution: To Approve Parish Council reserves statement for end FY 2024-25 (TR)

An overview of the Parish Council reserve statement, reflecting the situation at the end of FY 2024-25, was provided by TR, having been approved by the Finance Advisory Group. Earmarked reserves included key projects in the village including traffic, playing field/playground development, footpaths, Neighbourhood Plan review, community van and new amenities at Milestone Lane. There have also been new allocations for water works and bus stop works.

The resolution to approve the Parish Council reserves statement for end FY 2024-25 was proposed by TR and seconded by JM. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to add the approved 2024-25 PC Reserves Statement to the PC website.

Action: Clerk to add a discussion item regarding bus shelters/hard standing on B430 to the 2nd July 2025 PC meeting.

23.424.13 Resolution: To Approve Emergency Appointment of Internal Auditor, L White – Albry Audits, to review FY 2024-25 due to inability of originally appointed auditor to complete the review, as highlighted at 7th May 2025 Parish Council meeting (TR)

The resolution to approve the Emergency Appointment of Internal Auditor, L White – Albry Audits, to review FY 2024-25 due to the inability of the originally appointed auditor to complete the review, as highlighted at 7th May 2025 Parish Council meeting was proposed by TR and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

25.424.14 For Discussion: Review of Internal Audit Report 2024-2025 and Parish Council comments (TR)

The processes of financial and governance scrutiny were summarised and the Annual Internal Audit Report discussed. The report analyses and evaluates the processes and internal controls of the Parish Council against a list of fourteen set objectives. It was noted that the Council met all but one of the required objectives in financial year 2024-25.

The report from the internal auditor highlighted that a report on the review of the effectiveness of internal audit had not been undertaken as set out in objective C.

'This Authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these'.

The Parish Council confirmed that it maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption. Whilst the Parish Council was aware of all measures of internal control that had been put in place during the year and regularly discussed and actioned the internal auditors reports it was agreed that it had not produced a report covering the effectiveness of internal control.

Further recommendations and guidance were provided in the report which the Council discussed and will process over the coming year.

The Parish Council have provided comments against each item mentioned in the internal auditors report and will provide an update on progress on the recommendations later in the year.

Action: Clerk to place all documents relating to the internal audit report onto the Parish Council website.

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25.424.15 For Discussion and Resolution: To Approve: Parish Council review of effectiveness of Internal Audit report (TR)

Following guidance provided by the internal audit report the council has prepared a report on the review of effectiveness of internal audit relating to the Council, to be reviewed annually. The Council discussed and agreed on the main points highlighted in the report.

The resolution to approve the Parish Council review of effectiveness of Internal Audit report was proposed by TR and seconded by JM. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to place the review of effectiveness of Internal Audit report onto the Parish Council website.

25.424.16 Resolution: To Approve Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024-2025: Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025 (TR)

The Parish Council’s combined precept and other income for 2024/25 exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5million and therefore Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 has been completed at the end of the financial year and was discussed by the Council.

Following the review of the internal auditors report each statement on the Annual Governance Statement 2024-25 (Section 1) was discussed by the Councillors. It was agreed that all statements had been met except for item 2 ‘We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness’ where the ‘No’ column would be ticked. Whilst the report on the review of the effectiveness of internal audit had been discussed in a previous agenda item at this meeting, the annual governance statement reflects the position at the end of March 2025 and the Council had not provided a report prior to that date; however all other systems of internal control are deemed adequate.

A cover note is to be provided to the external auditor to provide an explanation for the ‘No’ response in Section 1 and to describe how the Parish Council will address the weaknesses identified. This note will be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

The resolution to approve Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025 of the AGAR form was proposed by TR and seconded by DB. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

The Chairman signed Section 1 of the AGAR form.

Action: Clerk to provide a cover note providing an explanation for the no response in Section 1, to also be placed on the PC website with the other audit documents.

25.424.17 Resolution: To Approve Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024-2025: Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024-2025, including explanations of variances and reserves (TR)

Section 2 of the AGAR report – Accounting Statements 2024-2025 was discussed, with reference to the variances and reserves spreadsheets.

The Clerk, as the Parish Council’s Responsible Finance Officer, confirmed to the chair that she had signed Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024-2025 prior to the meeting on behalf of Weston on the Green Parish Council.

The resolution to approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024-2025 of the AGAR form was proposed by TR and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

The Chairman signed Section 2 of the AGAR form.

The signed AGAR form and required documents will be sent by email to the external auditor, Moore, no later than 30th June 2025 and required documents will also be published on the Parish Council website by that time.

Action: Clerk to send off signed AGAR form and documents to the external auditors no later than 30th June 2025 and upload all required finance documents to the website.

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25.424.18 To Note: Notice of Period of Exercise of Public Rights to be set to run from Monday 9th June 2025 to Friday 18th July 2025. This is the official period of time where the public can request to see the accounts of the Parish Council (TR)

It was confirmed that the Responsible Financial Officer had set the Period of Exercise of Public Rights to run from Monday 9th June 2025 to Friday 18th July 2025 and the public notice for advertising the Period of Exercise of Public Rights would be placed on the Parish Council noticeboard on 6th June 2025.

Action: Clerk to ensure notice for the exercise of public rights is placed on village noticeboards and on the website.

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

TR requested approval of the invoices detailed in the table below.

PC Ref	Payee	Purpose	Total (incl VAT)	Budget Line	Amount Remaining in 2024/25-26 Budget Line
501*	Clear Insurance Management Ltd	Parish Council Insurance 2025-26	£522.57	Insurance & Auditing/Insurance	£600.00
502*	Oxford Edens	Grass cutting 06/05/25 (playground, stocks/Ben Jonson, Church Close, Bletchingdon Rd bollards, village gates)	£745.10	Village Works/Grass Cutting	£3,584.62
503*	Masters Mechanics	Community bus service works & MOT	£387.91	Village Works/Community Bus	£2,500.00
504*	Oxford Edens	Grass cutting 19/05/25 (playground, stocks/Ben Jonson, Church Close)	£357.69	Village Works/Grass Cutting	£2,839.52
505	123 Connect Limited	SSL Website Certificate	£62.40	IT/Website / Domain Hosting / SSL Website Certificate	£210.00
506	123 Connect Limited	Website Hosting	£140.16	IT/Website / Domain Hosting / SSL Website Certificate	£147.60
507	L White - Albry Audits	Internal audit review 2024-25	£350.00	Insurance & Auditing/Audit Fees	£700.00
508	Graham Barnett	Fuel for community van (Sainsburys)	£95.14	Village Works/Community Bus	£2,112.09

* invoice already been paid due to payment timescales

It was confirmed that invoices 501-504 had already been paid as payment was due before this meeting approval.

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

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

DB welcomed the new Oxfordshire County Councillor – Laura Gordon - and thanked her for attending the meeting.

Councillor Gordon (OCC) provided the following update:

- Thank you for electing me and is currently in the early days of gathering information and knowledge.
- Road repair investment: the budget has been increased significantly to undertake higher quality repairs as well as doing more of them, alongside road resurfacing hotspots.
- Flooding: gullies will now be cleared annually, work in the Otmoor ward is scheduled to be carried out in February/March 2026 and then it will be carried out on an annual cycle. In the meantime issues are to be reported as usual via Fix My Street.
- Local Government reorganisation: consultation launched as detailed above.

DB raised the issue over a lack of PC interaction and short timescales in which to digest a lot information. Councillor Gordon confirmed that we are not the first Council to have raised the communication issue and will try and help to mitigate the effects in the future. Rural areas are different and the role of the parish is key and therefore getting the right relationship with parishes is also key.

In terms of CDC, apart from the local government reorganisation information mentioned above, the Local Plan is expected to go to the planning inspector over summer 2025.

25.424.21 Resolution: To Approve Terms of Reference for Traffic Calming and Transport Advisory Groups (DB)

This item was deferred until the 2nd July 2025 Parish Council meeting.

Action: Clerk to add Terms of Reference for Traffic Calming and Transport Advisory Groups to July PC meeting agenda.

25.424.22 For Discussion: Provision via Council website provider for Parish Councillors to utilise specific .gov email addresses, at no additional cost to the Council (DB)

DB highlighted the importance of the utilisation of separate Councillor email addresses. It is important to have an historical record for each specific portfolio or should there be a freedom of information request, it also aids in the transition of councillors.

Previously when the setting up of specific e-mail addresses had been discussed with our IT provider the cost for each address (excluding the clerks) was prohibitive. The clerk inquired again recently and the provision of specific councillor .gov.uk e-mail addresses was now free.

The Councillors agreed this was a good idea and it was suggested to set up the following .gov.uk e-mail addresses for: Chair, Finance, Planning and Traffic.

Action: Clerk to contact the Councils IT provider, 123 Connect, to organise the setting up of Councillor specific .gov email addresses.

25.424.23 For Information: Update on review of Neighbourhood Plan (DB/SD)

DB provided a summary on the current situation of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) review.

The Parish Council responded to Christina Cherry's (CDC) query about sites being offered for housing in the village, highlighting we would not be providing new housing sites at this time and would object to sites being allocated. We lack transport for getting children to school as there is no school in the village and it is difficult for young families to live here if they do not have a car.

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DB and SD attended a workshop provided by the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plan Alliance on "Site Allocation". On the back of that we asked for a separate session to discuss the viability of a re-write of our NP at this stage. The issues are:

- we do not have new sites to put forward as there are four new houses to be developed in the village plus those on our chosen sites – not yet planned.
- there are a number of houses for sale in the village including on Milestone Lane.
- it is an expensive village in terms of housing.
- currently there is an application for five houses with CDC.
- Possible Issues:
 - i) we might re-draw the village envelope.
 - ii) we could designate village parking areas to preserve our verges.
 - iii) we need to update our compliance sections at the end of each policy because of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
 - iv) with the current Cherwell Local Plan still in effect we have a slight hesitancy because of the repeated effort required if the draft plan is permitted. Also, the draft plan is a more realistic description of our village – we are still haunted by the categorisation (A) based on the error of stating we have a school.
 - v) it could be more realistic to include employment sites.
- Committee: six villagers are willing to be on the committee.
- Current work: The profile of the village has changed since 2015, when we did our last survey. SD has created a draft survey to be discussed with the committee and once agreed to be presented to the Council at the 2nd July meeting.
- Concern: We are not fully convinced that tweaks to the NP would necessarily call for a referendum. However, there is a possibility that new data would have a greater effect on the Parish Council's Development Plan.

To this extent a further letter has gone to CDC asking for advice.

Action: Clerk to add Neighbourhood Plan survey review to July PC meeting.

25.424.24 **Next Parish Council Meeting Date:** Wednesday 2nd July 2025, 7.30pm (DB)

Meeting Closed: 21.26

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