

## STANDLAKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Standlake Parish Council, held in the Youth Club, Church End, on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 7.30pm

Present:

Mr. B. Parnham                      Chairman  
Mr. J. Rippin                        Vice Chairman  
Mrs. J. Macdonald  
Mr. D. Jeffcoat  
Mr. J. Clements  
Mr. B. Smith  
Mr. D. Bevan                        Clerk  
WODC Cllrs. L. Nicholls and C. Maynard.

1. APOLOGIES – Cllr. D. Levy, Mrs. A. Knipe
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest.
3. CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR – Mr. B. Smith was welcomed to the council as the new member and signed his acceptance of office.
4. PUBLIC ITEMS – No members of the public were present.
5. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

OCC: See Cllr. Levy's attached report.

WODC: Cllr. Nicholls reminded the meeting that it was important that residents responded to the WODC consultation on the Local Plan 2041. Regarding the outline application for 10 houses at Eagle Farm, Cllr. Nicholls said that it was expected, but not confirmed, that this would be brought before the WODC Lowlands Planning Committee in early November.

See Cllr. Maynard's attached report.

6. PLANNING – 23/02464/FUL: Demolition of existing engineering workshop. Erection of 2 dwellings with associated parking, turning, landscaping, private amenity space and access to include the installation of solar panels on south-western elevations (retrospective). 61 High Street Standlake Oxfordshire: Victorium Developments Limited. No objection.

23/02525/HHD: Erection of a first-floor rear extension, conversion of attic including side gable and front gabled dormer window, plus flat roofed storage area within internal roof valley. Enlarged entrance door and addition of rooflights to porch. Addition of covered gazebo adjoining rear elevation: Dormer House 26 Aston Road Brighthampton: Mr and Mrs M Harvey. No objection.

WODC Local Plan 2041 – meeting 18th October.

7. MINUTES – Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated to all members, were agreed as a true record, and were signed by the chairman.

### 8. MATTERS ARISING

*Sewage/Flooding* – Mr. Parnham said he was aware that Thames Water were still monitoring flows in Standlake, but he was not getting any feedback. Cllr. Maynard said he would follow up with TW. Similarly, Mr. Parnham is aware that OCC is carrying out investigations into the flooding on the High Street, but they do not respond to requests for updates.

*Roads/Speedwatch/20 mph restrictions* – Mrs. Knipe reported (by email) the following: 18 sessions were held during September resulting in 177 offenders being reported to Thames Valley Police (TVP) with a maximum speeder of 56mph. Typically, 10 offenders are recorded at each session. With dark mornings and evenings, group activity is restricted in accordance with TVP rules.

Thanks to all operators who give up their time, many of whom still work but find the time to make our roads safer. Please, we need more volunteers - even if you can give 1 hour per month that would be great - drop an email to [speedwatch@standlakepc.org.uk](mailto:speedwatch@standlakepc.org.uk)

Other matters:

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20mph zones: OCC anticipate the limits being in place either just before Christmas or early in the New Year. OCC wouldn't fund calming as part of the 20 Project beyond the road markings and replacement of any 30 VAS signs rendered redundant by now being in a 20 limit and unable to be re-calibrated.

A meeting was held on Friday 15th September with OCC, Dan Levy, Brian Parnham, David Bevan, and Robert Maxwell (Speedwatch Co-ordinator) to discuss the various other options to improve road safety as previously detailed. Funding of course will be a major issue. We are waiting for the report to be issued by OCC. Mr Jeffcoat referred to recent correspondence with First and Last Mile and said that he was particularly concerned to see more protection given to children crossing the A415 at The Orchard, Brighthampton to catch the school bus. Mr Parnham said that OCC were aware of this issue and hoped that some positive action could be taken. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.

*Playground/Recreation Ground & Maintenance* - Mr. Parnham had nothing major to report; some items are showing wear and tear but nothing dangerous, and as in previous years we will do a walk round in March to review what works need to be undertaken.

Installation of the Lower Windrush Tennis Club cabin is progressing, and mains water and sewage according to one of the contractors, should be connected by the end of this week. Works seem to be causing minimal disruption which is good news.

Mrs. Macdonald said that the recent cutting had left long grass cuttings on the ground. The clerk said that the rapid grass growth this season was to blame and there was no practical method of picking up cuttings on a field of that size. Mr. Parnham and Mr. Smith said they would investigate if anything could be done, possibly by asking a local farmer to help.

Mr. Clements said there was nothing major to report at the Windrush Way playpark, but he was aware of the problems surrounding the emptying of the litter bin. Mr. Rippin noted that the problems with the litter bins in the Rack End playground had resulted in their being removed; the clerk said that they had been replaced by a litter pick on a fortnightly basis. Mr. Clements said he would monitor the frequency with which the bin filled and report back for a decision.

*Environment/Standlake Nature Recovery Network* - Mrs. Macdonald reported the following: *Spring bulbs*: Unfortunately, the ordered bulbs have not yet been delivered, so the free spring bulbs have not been distributed to people. This will be done at the next village market in November. *Village Hall*: Members of the SBNRN team have been tidying and raking the wildflower bank at the Village Hall and tidying the flower beds around the Hall. *Hedge Laying*: On Sunday 8th Stuart Bridger and the hedge laying team will start the work of laying the hedge at the top end of the new burial ground at the Church. The brash collected will be stored in a corner of the car park, and when the work is completed, Mark Pascoe will give a quote to chip the brash, which we will dispose of. *Village litter pick*: All plans for the litter pick on Saturday 28th October are in place, and posters will be put on Facebook etc shortly - volunteers welcome! *Bank details*: these will be supplied to the clerk shortly so that funds can be transferred to a SBNRN account.

*Coronation* - Mr. Parnham said the planters were being constructed and will be delivered shortly.

*CCTV in car park* - Mr. Clements said: he believed that a solar powered security light mounted on a pole would probably be the most cost-effective solution to discourage people from parking there after dark. In any event, legislation would be introduced shortly to ban the unlawful use of nitrous oxide. This should reduce the extent to which this undesirable practice occurs in the village. Mr Clements will obtain an estimate for installing a light at the far end of the car park.

*War Memorial* - The clerk said that the cleaning was now complete, and the lettering did not need repainting.

*Hornsway cutting* - Mr. Parnham has still not had any reply from OCC. Mr Jeffcoat said that, without any action by OCC, it may be necessary to repeat in 2024 the cutting session carried out by volunteers earlier this year, potentially more than once.

9. CORRESPONDENCE - St. Giles Church: thanks for share of Coronation Mugs sale profits. First and Last Bus: thanks for grant.

10. ACCOUNTS - The clerk reported that the council's financial position remains satisfactory and within budget.

Received: £12,500 - the second half of the 23/24 Precept.

The following accounts were approved: (paid\*)

Moore - audit fee	£252.00*
WO Citizen's Advice	£150.00*
J G Le Huray - village Xmas tree	£170.00*
Abingdon Stone & Marble - war memorial cleaning	£1050.00*

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C Cleland- c'yard mowing	£372.50*
V Hall - annual grant	£750.00*
First & Last Bus - grant	£500.00*

11. BUDGET 24/25 INITIAL DRAFT - The clerk presented the initial draft of the budget for FY2024/25. He reminded the meeting that, because of the requirement to provide the Precept request to WODC by the end of December, the figures were of necessity only a best estimate of what would be the basis of that Precept; this would be refined at the next two meetings. He went on to say that councillors should be aware that in the past few years the council had been utilising reserves to maintain spending levels, and this was reflected in the reducing final closing bank balances at the end of each successive FY. This view was endorsed by Mr. Jeffcoat and both he and the clerk said that there was no realistic process to combat this except by raising the Precept (which has remained at its present level of £25,000 since FY 17/18) if the council wished to continue to provide funding for projects and services over and above that required by law. After some discussion, Mr. Parnham urged councillors to think on this and communicate thoughts and suggestions by email before the November meeting. Mr. Smith suggested that it may be possible to persuade local businesses or residents to sponsor certain items previously paid for by the council. An example is the Christmas tree. This should be discussed once the budget has been agreed.

12. LETTER OF SUPPORT - FIRST & LAST BUS - Mr. Jeffcoat drafted a letter to OCC supporting the request for a grant to First and Last and presented this to the council. It was unanimously agreed that Standlake PC supported this application and Mr. Parnham signed the letter on behalf of the council. Mr. Jeffcoat will forward this to OCC.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Mr. Parnham said that the next meeting will be held in the Youth Club on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.30 pm. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Chairman ..... Date .....

### County Councillor Report, 9 October 2023 - Dan Levy

**County Council administration** The Labour group has resigned from the administration at County Hall and withdrawn from the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance. This follows an OFSTED report which highlighted a number of failings in the County Council's support for those with Special Educational Needs. In response to the demands of a number of the parents of those children and our observation of how the department was being run, the Lib Dem and Green groups suggested that Labour that it might choose to have a change in the cabinet leadership of the Children's Services directorate. Labour apparently took this as meaning that their freedom of choice of cabinet members was being curtailed.

It is very unfortunate, particularly as many people had congratulated us on being able to put together a progressive alliance. The Lib Dems and Greens have formed a minority administration that will continue to implement the objectives previously agreed by the council. Among other things, we are appointing a cabinet member specifically to address SEND issues with urgency.

At the same time, the Cabinet member for finance and property, Calum Miller, has chosen to stand down to spend more time campaigning to become the first MP for the new Bicester and Woodstock constituency (which contains Eynsham, South Leigh and Cassington). I have taken over this cabinet role, in a challenging time for council budgets. And I have resigned from the WODC Executive, while remaining a district councillor at WODC.

**Botley Road** The work to build a new station in Oxford ran into issues when the road under the railway bridge was found to be covering an interesting archaeological structure. That has made creating the new bridge more difficult. In order to meet the deadline for finishing the new station by October 2024, Network Rail have taken the decision to move to 24 hour working and to keep the closure of Botley Road to motor vehicles during the period they had previously planned to open it. That means the road will remain closed to cars (but open to pedestrians) during the Oct23 to March 24 period. Stagecoach will continue to run the S1 service to the station via the A40 and the excellent E1 to Osney.

The additional closure is difficult. Businesses remain open on Botley Road. At the end of the process we will have a bridge that is no longer too low for conventional buses and which endangers people on foot or

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bike. And a station with additional platforms to accommodate the new service to Milton Keynes and the potential services from Cowley and from Carterton/Witney/Eynsham.

At the same time, National Highways are working on the A420/A34 junction and have insisted on doing this even while National Rail have closed Botley Road.

**Aston to Ducklington.** The road is being repaired and will be closed for another few weeks. The work was much needed. In the interim, can I urge people not to drive via Yelford, whose road is very much not designed for high traffic volumes.

**Electoral Commission review of Oxfordshire.** As you may recall, the County Council seats and boundaries for Oxfordshire are under review by the Electoral Commission. The process has now moved to public consultation. Details here <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/oxfordshire> The suggested new structure would put Aston, Standlake and Yelford into a new seat covering Bampton and South Carterton in time for the next set of County Council elections in 2025.

As ever, please get in touch with issues, comments, or anything else via [dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### District Councillor update 11 October 2023 - Charlie Maynard

**Local Plan consultation** - this is the opportunity to give your views on how our district should develop out to 2041. Given I'm Chair of the Witney Oxford Transport Group seeking to restore the Carterton-Witney-Eynsham-Oxford railway, you won't be surprised that I am speaking up loudly for Scenario 8, which focuses on putting housing around sustainable public transport rather than haphazardly around our villages. Whatever your thoughts are, please give them. The deadline is October 25th. Online - <https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/the-future-pattern-of-development?hasAccess=true> Email - [planning.consultation@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.consultation@westoxon.gov.uk) Mail - Planning Policy Team at West Oxfordshire District Council, Woodgreen Offices, New Yatt Road, Witney, OX28 1NB.

**Community funding** - The council has just launched a platform through which anyone can raise money easily for community purposes. Please have a look at <https://news.westoxon.gov.uk/news/if-you-can-imagine-it-you-can-crowdfund-it-council-launches-westhive-community-crowdfunding-to-transform-neighbourhoods> and have a think about how you could put it to work!

**Sewage / Thames Water** - I met them last Friday. I am pushing them to quantify what upgrades they are planning for Standlake, given the very poor performance of the treatment works.

**Flooding** - I spent the morning of Wed 4th at a Windrush Catchment Partnership meeting. My main interest is in what (ideally, natural) flood control measures can be undertaken upstream in the headwaters to lower and slow the flood crest through Witney and beyond. We have a long way to go here, but the Evenlode CP is a good example of what's possible and a good path to follow.