

STANDLAKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Standlake Parish Council, held in the Youth Club, Church End, on 8th October 2024 at 7.30pm

Present:

Mr. B. Parnham	Chairman
Mr. D. Jeffcoat	Vice Chairman
Mrs. J. Macdonald	
Mr. J Rippin	
Mr. J. Clements	
Mr. B. Smith	
Mr. D. Bevan	Clerk

OCC Cllr. Mr. D. Levy. WODC Cllr. S. Cosier, Mr. and Mrs. Ling, Mr. J. Bond- Smith.

1. APOLOGIES –Mrs. A. Knipe.
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Mr. B. Smith – planning application 24/01341/FULL 138 Abingdon Rd.
3. PUBLIC ITEMS – Mr. Parnham closed the meeting at 7.35pm. Mrs. Ling said she did not want to speak at this time but wanted to hear what councillors had to say about planning application 24/01341/Full. No other members of the public wished to speak. Mr. Parnham then reopened the meeting.
4. COUNTY and DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS The clerk reported that Cllr. Maynard – now our MP – emailed and expressed his intention to attend as many meetings as possible subject to demands as an MP. He will not be relinquishing his District councillor post until May2025. See Cllr. Levy and Cllr. Cosier's reports attached. Cllr. Cosier stressed WODC's intention to push the awareness of the campaign to increase the take up of Pension Credit. Mr. Jeffcoat said that, as a volunteer at Citizen's Advice, he wanted to advertise the CA's direct line at its Witney office for Pension Credit enquires and asked that this information be added to the WODC website. Cllr. Cosier asked for the details to be sent to him and Mr. Jeffcoat agreed.
Cllr. Levy said that the Lower Windrush Valley Project had now been revived. Mrs. Macdonald volunteered to be the local representative, and this was gratefully accepted. Regarding the bus services mentioned in Cllr. Levy's report, Mr. Jeffcoat who was a volunteer driver for First and Last Mile buses (F&L), said that the popularity of the school bus service had necessitated an extra bus. This meant that F&L needed more financial support from OCC or the provision of an additional coach to serve Bartholomew School. Cllr. Levy said he would follow this up with OCC.
5. PLANNING – 24/01341/FULL Change of use of land to increase domestic curtilage along with erection of 2m high boundary fence (retrospective): 138 Abingdon Road, Standlake, Witney. Mr. Parnham said he was of the opinion that the proposed change by the applicants involving the movement of the fence did not materially change his original objection. Mr. Jeffcoat expanded on his objections but was interrupted by Mrs. Ling who challenged some of his facts. Mr. Parnham told Mrs. Ling that she could not speak once the council was considering the applications; Mrs. Ling expressed her dissatisfaction as she understood she could ask questions. Following further discussions a vote was taken to object with 4 for objection and 1 abstaining.
6. MINUTES - Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 10th September 2024, copies of which had been previously circulated to all members, were agreed as a true record, and were signed by the chairman.

7. MATTERS ARISING

Sewage/Flooding – No update has been received from Thames Water and this matter continues to be pursued. Regarding High Street flooding an update has been received from OCC, who are responsible for surface water drainage which can be summarised as follows: *most of the water is ground water issuing from Thames Water foul manholes onto High Street, therefore not surface water. In addition to this because the ground water levels are high again, the land drainage systems, ditches etc are being inundated, this in turn impacts on highway drainage, as the water courses that highway drainage outfalls are not able to cope with significant rainfall. Once the rainfall eases, the highway drainage systems do clear, this indicates that those systems are functioning, which has been confirmed by previous investigations/surveys. Any future works for High Street, Standlake will be assessed against all of the other demands across the county, the assessment is an ongoing process, but I am not able to provide any further information at the moment.* Mr. Parnham will revert to OCC and ask if they feel that some of the problem is with Thames Water, are they engaging with Thames Water to work together to address the issue? The Parish Council will continue to pursue and update.

STANDLAKE PARISH COUNCIL

Roads/Speedwatch/20mph – Mrs. Knipe reported (by email): During September 10 roadside sessions were held which considering the weather and volunteers not being available is still a great effort which is appreciated and thanks to all volunteers. 82 offenders were reported, 2 with no MOT, 3 no Tax and 2 on SORN. This information is passed by TVP to DVLA. In the 30mph zone 1% were recorded as speeding and 24% in the 20mph zones. Now holidays are over dialogue will continue with OCC regarding traffic calming measures, SIDs and crossing points.

With regard the condition of Aston Road, this has been put forward for assessment including edge strengthening. Unfortunately owing to OCC budget constraints it may not happen within the current financial year so it is important any issues are logged on FixMyStreet. We will continue to monitor and pursue.

Playgrounds/Recreation Ground – Mr. Clements reported that he had not found any problems at the Windrush Way play park and noted that the waste bin had now been emptied. Mr. Parnham and Mr. Jeffcoat had made a walk round inspection of the Rack End playground with reference to the recent RoSPA report. There were no 'red' items in the report, but a number of improvements and minor upgrades were noted and Mr. Parnham suggested these should be carried out in the early Spring; this was agreed.

Environment/Nature Recovery Network - Mrs. Macdonald made the following report: Village Hall - We have been struggling with the wet weather conditions and have out sourced the cutting of the grass on the wildflower bank at the Village Hall, which has now been done, by Absolute Solutions. LWVP- We look forward to meeting the new LWVP manager Martyn Lane as soon as possible and seeking his advice on ecological management issues. Autumn Litter Pick - Saturday 26th October 10 – 12, meeting at the Village Hall. Tea and cake kindly provided by members of the WI. Volunteers please, as many as possible, to keep our village looking clean. Please bring gloves and wear bright clothing, high viz jackets and litter pickers available to borrow. Volunteers participate at their own risk.

Recreation Ground Extension - Mr. Rippin reported that he had been in contact the agents handling the sale of Eagle Farm and associated land. The agents advise that they are at late discussions on the whole package with a single buyer. Mr. Rippin said that any further progress seemed pointless at this stage; this matter is therefore closed.

8. CORRESPONDENCE. – a request has been received from a new resident for an extra Martins Lane street name plate at the junction with Abingdon Road. It was agreed that the Parish Council would support this request, and the clerk will advise WODC.

9. ACCOUNTS – The clerk reported that the accounts were in a satisfactory state and noted that the second half of the precept (£15000) has now been paid.

Received: WODC £15,000 (Precept)

For payment/approved: (* already paid)

HMRC – clerk PAYE	£420.00
J G LeHuray – Xmas tree	£175.00
Abs Solutions - mowing	£380.00*
C Cleland – c'yard mowing	£372.50*
Standlake V Hall – grant	£750.00*

10. DRAFT BUDGET FY25/26 – The clerk said that he had distributed copies of the draft budget to all councillors and stressed that the requirements for the coming year were entirely at the discretion of councillors. Mr. Parnham said that he did not want a long discussion at this meeting but asked that councillors review the draft and email with their suggestions. If there were significant concerns or changes then a meeting could be held either in person or electronically.

11. DATES OF NEXT MEETING – Mr. Parnham said that the next meeting will be held in the Youth Club on Tuesday 5th November 2024 at 7.30 pm.

12. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Chairman Date

County Councillor's Report – Dan Levy.

Flooding

The recent period of exceptionally heavy rain, with a month's worth falling in one day, led to flooding in many places, including those that normally don't flood. There was flooding in places where all the

STANDLAKE PARISH COUNCIL

flood infrastructure, including county council-maintained highways gulleys, had recently been cleared. It seems likely that extreme weather events will become more common. It is clearly important that the County Council, as both Lead Flood Authority and as Highways authority, learns lessons and leads cross-agency work to manage the issues. Can I remind people that there is a flood toolkit online at Oxfordshire County Council – Flood Toolkit (oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com) and in an emergency the fire service is the first port of call.

Roads and buses.

Still no more news from Network Rail relating to the timeline for reopening Botley Road. It is frustrating. Pulhams, now owned by the Oxford Bus Company, part of the GoAhead group, has increased the frequency of buses from Abingdon to Witney, via Standlake. First and Last Mile continue to deliver services from Standlake to Eynsham and Hanborough Station. Both provide services to take pupils to secondary schools. These services are included in the new, whole county bus ticket which caps daily fares. More details at www.mybusoxfordshire.com

Budget

We are at the point in the year when the County Council budget is being formulated. There has been an initial consultation with residents to discover key preferences. The level of funding available to local authorities and the rules about what level of funding we will be able to raise locally remain unclear. There should be some announcements by the Chancellor in her statement on 30 October. We know that there won't be the promised multiyear settlements in time for local authorities to set their budgets for the year 25-26, but that the government intends to change local government funding arrangements for following years.

Planning

Oxfordshire County Council is not a Local Planning Authority, but it gets involved as a statutory consultee on Highways and Flooding issues. Each of the LPAs in the county are producing new Local Plans, and the County Council will be consulted on each. We have concerns about the requirement for large numbers of new houses, which are not always earmarked for places in which the infrastructure is suitable for them. I welcome the Planning Inspectorate's rejection of the Oxford City Council Local Plan on the grounds that they failed to consult with other councils. Oxfordshire is not just the city, and we aren't here to do what they try to dictate. I can be contacted on dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk

District Councillor's Report – Steve Cosier

Full Council

Considering the Government's resolution to end the Winter-fuel allowance, the alliance resolved to expedite a solution and quickly identify those in this district who are eligible for the Winter Fuel Allowance pension credit but do not claim it.

A motion was put to the council and subsequently passed in relation to the Government's decision to remove the Winter Fuel Allowance. The council has resolved to try and maximise the take-up of pension credit and bring forward the administration and sign up of housing benefit and pension credit to help and reassure susceptible pensioners that they will be able to afford to heat their homes in winter.

The motion reads as follows: This Council notes the government's decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments (WFPs). Age UK estimates that the government's changes to WFPs could hit 2 million people across the country, some of whom badly need the money to stay warm this winter. This Council also notes the parlous state of the Public Finances that the new Government has inherited.

This Council resolves to:

1. Request that the Executive considers a report from officers with proposals for promoting a District awareness campaign working with our local NHS partners, Parish Councils and charitable, civic and religious groups, to encourage elderly residents who are eligible for means- tested benefits such as Pension Credit to register and claim them to ensure that they continue to receive WFPs this Winter and to ensure that those in need are sign-posted to the continuing Household Support Fund;
2. Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging an impact assessment of the government's decision to means test WFPs and asking HM Treasury to examine transitional measures to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who are eligible for, but who do not – or cannot – claim, other benefits under current thresholds are protected from fuel poverty.

NOTICE OF REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

West Oxfordshire District Council is conducting a review of polling district and polling places within West Oxfordshire. Written comments and representations are invited from any electors and other interested persons and bodies, including elected representatives and those with expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for disabled people. Although the review is of polling districts and polling places it is accepted that polling stations are linked to the review and representations and comments are invited regarding those polling stations currently used. The council has asked that persons or bodies making representations should, if possible, give alternative buildings/venues that may be used as polling places. In

STANDLAKE PARISH COUNCIL

conducting the review, the Council is requesting submissions from the (Acting) Returning Officer for the parliamentary constituency of Witney and the part of the Banbury, Bicester and Woodstock Constituencies within the West Oxfordshire District Council authority area. The deadline for submissions is Monday 4 November 2024. Comments and representations may be submitted as follows: By post: By email: Online: Electoral Services, West Oxfordshire District Council, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon OX28 1NB elections@westoxon.gov.uk <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/about-the-council/elections-and-voting/polling-districts-and-places/>

FLOODING

Following the recent rainfall many rivers remain at a high level. There are several flood alerts in place in the district. I have included a link to the areas with alerts in place: <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/alerts-and> Who can help and who do you need to contact in a flood: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/flooding/>