

**Minutes of the Northmoor Parish Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday 10 April 2024 at 8:00pm in the Village Hall**

Attendees

Dr Graham Shelton Chair
Mr Neil Reeves
Miss Stacey Reed
Mrs Juliet Druce
Mrs Carrie Berry
Mr Chris Isaac Clerk

OCC Cllr Dan Levy, WODC Cllr Lysette Nicholls

3 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

WODC Cllr Charlie Maynard

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Public Participation.

Mike Ryan thanked Graham Shelton for his hard work as Councillor and Chair of the Parish Council over the past 12 years, particularly his support to Mike when he was clerk. This sentiment was repeated by the others at the meeting.

Graham responded with thanks, and noted that community was a joint effort and he was sorry that Carrie and Neil were leaving.

Andrew Williams reported that the Village Hall was holding a pop up pub and looking into holding a fete at the same time as the produce show this year. They were looking for more ideas and any help would be welcomed.

Julie Williams requested that the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting includes the appointment of the PC representative for the Village Hall committee.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on the 13 March 2024, copies of which had been previously circulated to all members, were agreed as a true record, and were signed by the chair.

5. Reports from Councillors and Clerk

a. OCC Cllr Dan Levy and WODC Cllr Lysette Nicholls both gave reports in person, WODC Cllr C Maynard sent a report in his absence. All reports are included at the end of these minutes. Dan and Lysette also thanked Graham, Carrie and Neil who are all standing down at the end of the term, for their hard work and support over the years.

b. Stacey Reed informed the meeting that she would be applying for the Flood risk management funding on behalf of the Bablock Hythe community, with the aim of getting flood barriers installed and a generator for the Village Hall which is earmarked in the Emergency Plan as the refuge in the case of disasters.

She also asked Dan Levy about the possibility of OCC replacing the “traditional” signpost at Bablock Hythe, and getting a mirror installed on the corner at Bablock Hythe. Dan stated that OCC did not supply mirrors as they give a false sense of security, but he would enquire about the traditional style signpost.

c. Carrie Berry noted that the potholes outside of Red Lion Cottages were getting bad again and asked when the full repairs, which were originally due to be undertaken over easter were likely to happen. The clerk noted that he had already asked Dan Levy to investigate.

Carrie also asked if the Defibrillators were being checked regularly, Juliet Druce responded that they were checked monthly.

d. The clerk reported on the following points:

i. **ROSPA inspection**

The remaining play park equipment was due an inspection. It was believed that the inspection was needed to ensure the PC’s insurance was still valid, and there was a query as to who could carry out the inspection.

The clerk to check the Policy wording to see what is required.

ii. **Notice Boards**

Both noticeboards were in need of repair, particularly the Bablock Hythe board which was in a very sad state of repair.

Andrew Williams said that he would look at them to see if they were repairable.

iii. **Litter bag hoops**

WODC do not currently supply litter bag hoops, but they would look into the possibility of sourcing them in future.

iv. **Allotments**

There is now a half plot available, all the existing tenants had paid their invoices.

v. **Charities**

The payment to charities was delayed until this Financial Year as funds were not available last FY, due to the invoices being raised late.

vi. **Election**

New Councillors take office and previous Councillors retire on Tue 7 May.

The Chair remains until a successor elected, whether or not they are re-elected as a Councillor.

Annual Council meeting MUST be between Tue 7 and Tue 21 May.

First business is the election of Chair (previous Chair to preside until then).

6. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising this month.

7. **Finance**

There were no finance related decisions this month.

8. **Planning Applications**

Whilst there were no applications considered at the meeting, the following application was unanimously approved by the council out of committee as the return deadline was 9 Apr 24.

a. **APPLICATION NO: 24/00605/HHD**

PROPOSAL: Convert existing garage into a living area downstairs with a bedroom and ensuite in the loft space above.

9. Correspondence and any items to be raised for information.

There was no correspondence or items raised for information this month.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8 May 2024 at 8:00pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:45pm.

Signed..... Date. 8 May 2024.

County Council report, Dan Levy 4 Apr 24

I hope everyone has had a pleasant Easter, and that the worst of the wetness is behind us.

New special schools: The county council is planning two [new special schools](#) in the Didcot area to serve southeast Oxfordshire. One will specialise in educating children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) needs. Another special school is due to be built within the Valley Park development, and will specialise in educating children with Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and other needs.

In addition, as many people know, we are building or acquiring small children's homes to provide care in the county for those who would otherwise have to go somewhere else. This will provide better care for the children, at substantially lower cost. The home in Aston opened recently, and one is planned in Sutton.

Taking on potholes: OCC is launching a [£7m programme](#) this spring to refurbish nearly 100 roads across the county this spring from 8 April to 3 June. It is the biggest surface dressing programme for 20 years. The £7m is made up of £2.6m from the department for transport and additional budget for highways agreed in the 2024/2025 Lib Dem/Green budget (which was not supported by the Tories).

This is good, but it will not make up the approximately £20m gap per annum between what we need to maintain our roads and what the government awards us. And as the weather gets worse, as appears to be the case, the pressure on our roads will continue to grow.

Money for cycling and walking: Oxfordshire has been awarded £2.384 million for improving walking and cycling infrastructure. The award will be used for expansion of the school streets programme countywide and projects in Abingdon and Witney.

Tenants welcomed into supported housing: Adults with learning disabilities and autism have moved into new [accommodation](#) in Witney, purchased by OCC. A further four homes are planned, including in Horspath.

EV chargers: Oxfordshire has won another £3.6m to upgrade [EV infrastructure](#). This is of course a bit chicken and egg. Most people who buy electric cars only do so when they can charge them at home, but we need to make provision for those who are away from home or who can't charge at home. And we need excess capacity so that nobody turns up in urgent need of charging to discover there is no space.

Elections.

Not County Council related, but there are elections for WODC on 2 May. There is one seat up in the Standlake, Aston and Stanton Harcourt ward and one in Eynsham, Cassington and South Leigh. Can I remind people that they will need to take ID to the polling station, or else get an Voter Authority Certificate, or apply for a postal vote.

All the details are on the WODC web pages.

[Elections and voting - West Oxfordshire District Council \(westoxon.gov.uk\)](https://www.westoxon.gov.uk)

It has been a pleasure working with the two district councillors who are up for re-election.

As ever, I can be contacted at dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk and I would be delighted to hear from you.

District Councillor update, Lysette Nicholls, 10 Apr 24

Thank you to the outgoing Councillors and the Chair for all their hard work over the years alongside Councillors that are staying on. They have done a great job and want to recognise that and it has been a pleasure working with them.

5 Year Housing Supply & New Local Plan Consultation.

5-year housing supply already mentioned in the other District Councillor Report.

This is the second time in two years we have seen the 5-year housing supply challenged successfully and the only time in West Oxfordshire to my knowledge. Officers are looking at ways to ensure this is defended, however this places more pressure on the District to ensure the New Local Plan being consulted on is scrutinised something I highlighted very vocally on last year when we were consulted on the possible ideas for development, two of which were cluster and dispersed villages (Standlake and Brighthampton) which I was against as we need build houses in the right place with the right infrastructure.

Flood Risk Management Funding Opportunity OCC

Should have had an email – grant available 5-50K. Expressions of interest should be submitted by 30th April. (Can forward the email)

District Councillor update, Charlie Maynard, 10 Apr 24

Thames Water

As I write this, Standlake sewage treatment works has been discharging raw sewage for the 353 hours non-stop - <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/edm-map>

I received today some replies from Thames Water to the questions I asked them regarding the Standlake catchment (in which Northmoor village sits) in January. Standlake STW's sewage dumping record is abysmal and more than justifies installing monitors, as have been installed at Aston and Brize Norton with the goal of better understanding where the worst infiltration is. The obvious massive problem is that Thames Water is fast heading towards Administration (i.e. bankruptcy) and the probability of Thames Water spending the money required to fix this problem is low.

West Oxfordshire District Council has been shortlisted for a national award for its work campaigning on sewage. I am ambivalent about this. We have made groundbreaking strides over the last two years since taking over the administration by bringing in conditions linking development to upgrades in treatment works and networks. We've also taken apart Thames Water's extremely poor quality data and have forced changes in how they calculate the capacity of their treatment works. We've persuaded them (or forced them through strength of argument?) to change how they calculate catchment population, per capita consumption and the all-important Environment Agency's "multiplier", with Thames Water now agreeing to apply a 3.0x multiplier with no exceptions when considering upgrades in sewage treatment capacity. This has all be achieved with the district council having zero statutory power over Thames Water. On the (very large) downside, it's been a miserable couple of years seeing sewage endlessly spew into our rivers, with absolutely no end in sight. We need a government who is serious about addressing this issue, our current government certainly is not.

National Planning Inspector's decision

A national planning inspector has ruled against the unanimous view of West Oxfordshire District Councillors, allowing a 120 unit housing development just west of Minster Lovell. This is very disappointing, doubly so as the inspector found that the District Council was not forecast to meet its Five Year Housing Land Supply. This highlights the extremely difficult task of staying within the 5YHLS and the multiple ways that developers are able to win at appeal, even if we are within the 5YHLS. There is lots of work being done to shore up defences. We will see down the track how successful these efforts prove.

Local elections on May 2nd

Please vote! Please also remember to bring ID as that is now a requirement nationally.