

**Minutes of the Northmoor Parish Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 8:00pm in the Village Hall**

Attendees

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

5 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Mrs Carrie Berry, OCC Cllr Dan Levy, WODC Cllr Charlie Maynard WODC Cllr Lysette Nicholls

2. Declarations of Interest

Graham Shelton stated that Mr Simeon Anderson was a customer of his business, however as there were no decisions being made regarding the potential planning application it was deemed that it was acceptable for him to be involved in the discussions.

3. Public Participation.

A resident expressed their concern with the poor state of the Standlake Road particularly where the verges have been broken down at passing places.

Clerk to write to OCC Road Steward copying in Cllr Dan Levy

They also stated that whilst he had no issues with the planned Glamping Pod (Planning Application 24/00275/FUL covered later), he was concerned that others may follow suit and we could have many more applications in the future.

Graham Shelton stated that the Planning Policy didn't specifically mention holiday accommodation and so he would recommend that the new Parish Council revisit and revise it if they saw fit.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on the 14 February 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 & WODC Cllr C Maynard both gave reports which are included at the end of these minutes.

b. Juliet Druce gave an update on the allotments. We now have contact details for most of the tenants, and so the clerk will be able to issue this year's tenancy agreement. The latest water meter reading has been submitted. Several tenants have expressed their concern that the parking area can't be used in wet weather as it is too muddy, and enquired if some matting could be purchased. It was agreed that the matting would need to be self funded by the allotment tenants.

Juliet to discuss options with Emma Hare

c. Juliet also stated that the Emergency Plan was ready for publication and the defibrillators had been successfully registered on "The Circuit", where their status could be

centrally monitored.

Clerk to publish Emergency Plan onto the Village Website.

d. Stacey Reed stated that the “traditional” signpost at Bablock Hythe was in a sad state of repair and enquired who was responsible for its upkeep, and also asked if it would be possible to get a mirror installed on the corner at Bablock Hythe as there has been numerous near misses there.

Graham Shelton informed the meeting that sign was provided and previously repaired by Green Wood Parks, and that OCC would only replace it with a modern signpost.

Clerk to write to Dan Levy to request a mirror.

e. Graham Shelton informed the meeting that the annual litter pick had been a success and the PC had been well represented. The clerk has applied for an additional 10 litter pickers. Juliet Druce enquired if we could also get hoops to keep the bags open whilst picking

Clerk to ask WODC if they could also supply the hoops.

f. The clerk reported on the following points:

i. **Archiving of previous minutes**

Whilst attending the Introduction to Clerks course it was stated that all previous minutes should be kept at the County Archive in Cowley as it has the appropriate security, fire, flood and pest protection. Graham Shelton requested that if the Parish Records are moved to a central repository we keep paper copies in the Village Hall in their place.

ii. **Playpark FCC Grant**

The grant was submitted on 27 Feb, and is now being processed through the review process. Final award decision to be made at the FCC board meeting on 05 Jun 24.

iii. **Free portrait of HM King Charles**

The clerk has applied for a portrait to be hung the Village Hall.

iv. **SSE Road SSE Road Closure for West View power connection**

The early notification road signs were originally put in the wrong position in the village and after several emails eventually put in the correct place. The signs for the closure were erected and taken down on the day, and there were information signs at each end of the diversion indicating how to get to the other side of the closure. So this was far better than previous closures.

The clerk also notified the contractors of the incorrect road name on the map they had provided (they had labelled Bablock Road as Church Road on the map).

v. **Website and Email Update**

The clerk has consulted Andrew Williams and he agree that the Parish Online option was the most sensible approach. It provides everything the Parish Council needs in one package, is secure and maintains compliance with GDPR and accessibility legislation.

There will need to be a period of concurrent running time to allow the new website and email system to be set up along with a limited time of dual running to ensure emails are switched over and the website is redirected.

The Northmoor.org.uk domain was renewed in Dec 23 so only the monthly email fee and annual website fee will need to be paid to enable this dual running.

6. **Matters Arising**

a. **New PC representative for Village Hall Committee**

New PC representative for Village Hall Committee. Graham Shelton has identified a potential PC representative, and will be discussing the matter with them soon.

7. **Finance**

The councillors unanimously agreed that the following invoices should be paid:

- a. WODC Invoice for bin emptying - £522.29*. (This invoice had already been paid due to the payment deadline being before the meeting)
- b. OALC Membership 2024 - £168.
- c. Allotment 6 monthly rent - £39.50.

8. **Planning Applications**

a. **APPLICATION NO: 24/00275/FUL**

PROPOSAL: Change of use of land and erection of 1 no. glamping pod to provide holiday accommodation together with associated parking and garden.

The applicant gave an overview of the proposal, along with a brief overview of how livestock farmers now have to diversify to make a living. They reiterated that there was no intention to build more than one pod, however they would still offer limited camping spaces in their field but added that last year's scout camp was a one off.

The application was unanimously approved by the council.

Clerk to respond to WODC regarding the application

b. **APPLICATION NO: MW.0026/24**

Full planning application for the use and operation of the Dix Pit Household Waste Recycling Centre at Dix Pit Household Waste Recycling Centre, Linch Hill, Stanton Harcourt OX29 5BB.

The application was unanimously approved by the council.

Clerk to respond to OCC regarding the application

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

a. **Letter from Simeon Anderson**

Mr Anderson had previously sent a letter to the Parish Council regarding their intention to request change of use of Meadow Barn from holiday use to permanent residence so that they could move to the village. At the meeting Mr Anderson gave more detail and answered questions in order to gauge the council's level of support.

The councillors raised no objections, but stated that they would comment once the full application was received from WODC. The clerk pointed out that at least 3 councillors were standing down in May meaning that the application would be considered by different councillors, and so no assumptions should be made of future support should be assumed.

b. **Parish Council Elections Thursday 2 May 2024.**

The clerk outlined the key points for the forthcoming elections on 2 May.

The Notice of Election will be posted by 25 Mar.

Nominations from existing councillors and prospective councillors to be submitted between 25 Mar and 5 Apr. The election office advise submitting earlier if possible so that any errors can be rectified before the 5 Apr deadline.

Voters must be registered by 16 Apr.

The May Parish Council Meeting would normally be on Wed 8 May. If the election is contested the meeting has to be held on 10 May or later and so would have to be moved. If

it is uncontested the usual meeting date can be used (the meeting must be on 6 May or later).

c. Proposed 20mph and 30mph limits

The clerk relayed the email response from OCC regarding the parish Council's requested 30mph extension on Church Rd, Standlake Rd and the road leading to Moreton. OCC stated:

Regarding the 30mph extension on Church Rd, Standlake Rd and the road leading to Moreton. Unfortunately these roads do not align with our 20mph policy and therefore won't be able to include these within our proposals. The reason for not doing so in this case and other similar situations is not because we would not wish to reduce traffic speeds along here but rather that we do not believe a lower limit will have any measurable effect on speeds. The more extensively we implement lower limits the less chance we have of them being respected where they are most likely to reduce speeds such as in the more built-up areas and a lower posted speed limit could also make matters worse by providing a false sense of security to pedestrians. Regarding road markings, there will be new roundels at the entrances to both the new 20mph limit as well as the two 30mph limits.

This subject will be raised at the Annual Parish Meeting before responding to OCC

d. Annual Parish Meeting.

The agenda items for the Annual Parish Meeting were discussed and finalised. Clerk to publish the Annual Parish Meeting agenda on the village website and advertise via the village mailing lists and Facebook page.

e. Email regarding Dun Cow footpath,

The clerk had received an email from a member of the public asking if any of the councillors knew if the footpath still exists by the side of the Dun Cow. Graham Shelton suggested that the email be forwarded to the Alison Waller who is the PC Footpath representative.

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10 April 2024 at 8:00pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:15 pm.

Signed..... Date. 10 April 2024.

County Council report, Dan Levy 6 Mar 24

Tuesday 20 Feb was the Full Council meeting of the County Council at which we set a budget for the next financial year. The administration at County Hall, of which I am the Cabinet member with responsibility for finance, does not have an overall majority, after the departure of Labour from the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance. We therefore ended up with a very long meeting, trying to get agreement across the parties. And finally ended up adopting a slightly more expansive budget than I had thought ideal, but still well within the parameters of what is safe.

We agreed above inflation increases in spending on Adult Social Care and Children's services, and additional money going into flood defences and roads. We are offsetting this with a set of savings in areas such as reducing the layers of management and putting effort into ensuring that our children can be looked after in Oxfordshire rather than elsewhere. The County Council remains financially robust, but there are limits to what can be done within the funding available.

It has been a complex path to get to this point, involving really useful consultation exercises, and grappling with the government producing its "final" settlement, in two parts, so that we only discovered our final expected income earlier this month. It is a ridiculous process, and I hope that any incoming government, at the very least, commits to multiyear settlements so we can plan our spending and delivery and increase our ability to provide the services residents rightly demand, and the end to bidding in competition with other authorities for individual time limited pots of money for specific projects.

Flooding

As we have all noticed, the wet weather has continued for the past few months, and demonstrated the vulnerability of many places to flooding. The County Council is the lead flood authority, and works closely with the Emergency Services and WODC to respond to floods and try to prevent them. There will be a full cross-agency debriefing in the spring, and I would expect the input of parish councils will be sought.

The flooding in the parish, and especially at Bablockhythe, was substantial, and we need to respond appropriately to prevent it happening where we can, and to react effectively to it if it does.

This is mostly a separate issue to the issues with Thames Water and sewage, and we will continue to put effort into putting pressure on them and on the Environment Agency. As part of this process, the County Council has appointed the leaders of West Oxfordshire and of Vale of White Horse District Councils, Councillors Andy Graham and Bethia Thomas, who are both also county councillors, to act as joint County Council water champions.

Roads

A40 update.

No further progress to report. Discussions with Homes England continue. The public enquiry on the other HIF scheme, based in Didcot, commenced on 20 Feb.

You may have seen that the A40 cycle route is being scraped, to restore it to its original width after decades of neglect. It makes a huge difference.



Before



After

The section near Cassington and the Barnard Gate to Witney section has now been completed.

Traffic Filters.

As you may have read, once Botley Road is reopened to motor traffic, when National Rail finish their work, in October, the traffic filters in Oxford City Centre will be going live. They are designed to speed up buses and give bus passengers confidence that they will arrive quickly and on time.

Everywhere that you can currently drive to in Oxfordshire will still be accessible to drivers. The only difference is that you can't use the city centre as a through route. So if you wanted to go, let's say, Northmoor to Cowley you would use the ring road and come up the Cowley Road from the BMW plant or via Donnington Bridge, just as you probably would today.

Our expectation is that nearly all people living outside the ringroad will notice no difference, although they might be more tempted to use public transport as the services improve.

As ever, please contact me on dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk

District Councillor update, Charlie Maynard, 13 Mar 24

District Council passes balanced budget

On Wednesday 28th February, WODC passed a balanced budget. Given that local government funding has been cut 23% in real terms since 2011, that's quite an achievement. The Conservatives did not propose any amendments to the budget, but voted against it.

Police front desks

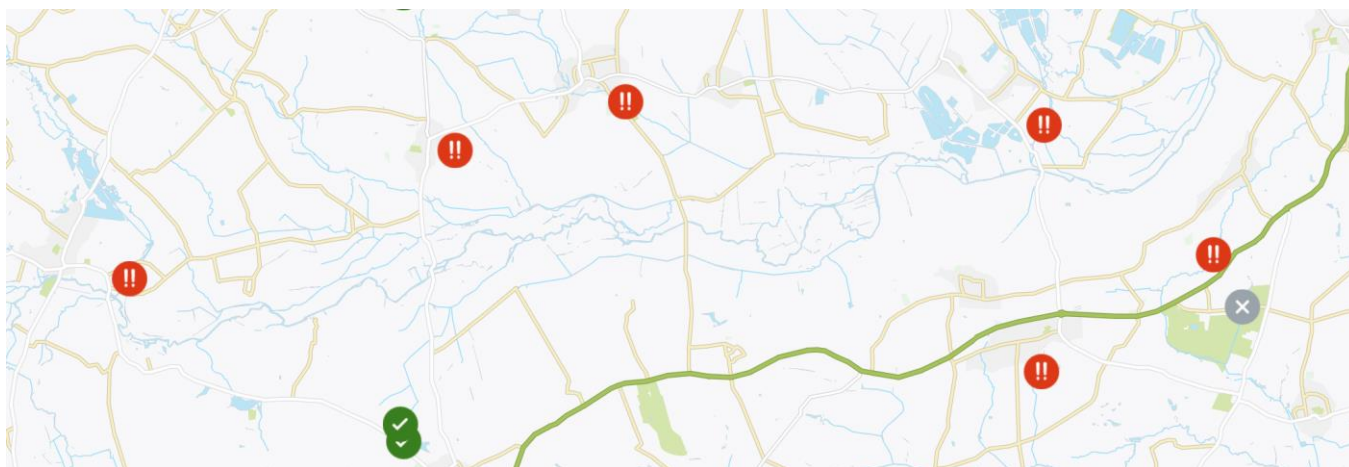
The local Lib Dems are launching a campaign to bring back the front desk at Witney's police station. The police front desk was closed during Covid and has not re-opened since. This means that if a resident wants to go and meet a police officer, they need to travel to either Oxford or Abingdon to do this. While some people are comfortable discussing issues either by phone or online, many people are not and want to be able to meet face to face. We understand that the police force has a deep commitment to serving and protecting the public. Part of this commitment is about ensuring that the public has direct, physical access to the police, which is both practically useful and helps maintain and build trust. Police front desks have re-opened in Covid in various places around the country, such as Devon and Hampshire, and we are keen that Thames Valley Police chart a course towards re-opening Witney's front desk.

Sewage

The overall picture remains dire. Water bills have been increased. This will likely prevent the water companies from going bust until at least after the general election and helps out shareholders and their bankers, but residents are taking the hit. Operationally, there is no sign that Thames Water is grasping the enormity of the challenge to get our sewage network and works up to scratch. As I write this, it has not rained for six days and Standlake's works (which is where Northmoor's sewage is pumped) has been dumping for 722 hours straight.

I still have not received answers to my January questions. I am chasing hard to get them.

Thames Water just state the following about their plans for Standlake "We expect this location to meet all government targets for storm overflows by 2030". Nothing more, despite the terrible dumping record of the works. What is needed – and there is no sign of it actually happening – are: a) improvements and capacity upgrades to Standlake's works, and b) for TW to seal the worst leaking sections of the Standlake and Northmoor network.



<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/edm-map>, as of 7th March 2024